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ON SOME ANTIQUITIES  
IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF  
DUNECHT HOUSE ABERDEENSHIRE

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ON SOME ANTIQUITIES  
IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF  
DUNECHT HOUSE ABERDEENSHIRE

BY

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TO  
THE BRIGHTNESS OF FRIENDSHIP  
AT  
DUNECHT HOUSE





## PREFACE

IN the autumn of 1919 some of the guests of Lady Cowdray at Dunecht House, on her Scottish estate of Dunecht, found marked on a large-scale Ordnance Map a Stone Circle, about 3 miles off in a direct line, quite near a main road, and about a mile further on another Stone Circle, also quite near a road. A car was called for, and Lord Cowdray and two friends, one of them an engineer, the other a person devoted to archaeology, went to look for the circles. They found the first circle in a small wood of fir trees. The archaeologist declared the principal feature of the circle to be unique in his experience, while mentioning the fact that he had never studied rude stone monuments which had neither patterns nor inscriptions to give them human interest. They went on to the next circle, and found the same apparently unique feature. Later on, they went to yet another Stone Circle marked on the map, and again found the apparently unique feature. Only the first circle was complete. The second circle had lost several of its stones. The third had lost more, but two or three of them were lying down *in situ*. In the autumn of 1920 Lady Cowdray and the writer visited and measured a large number of circles, unfortunately in terrible weather for the most part.

It was known to the archaeologist that there were ogam inscriptions in the district, two of them being among the most important in Caledonia; and that within an easy motor drive there was a minuscule inscription of six lines of which no satisfactory explanation had been given. This inscription they had visited in a previous year.

Further, the quick eye of the hostess of Dunecht had caught sight of some curious sculptures on a stone by the road-side on the way to the minuscule inscription; and other like stones in the neighbourhood had been shewn in Stuart's two volumes of *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*.

The suggestion was then made that for the sake of visitors at Dunecht a sort of guide book should be prepared, giving some simple description of the several objects and their meaning and uses.

Of course the thing grew, grew beyond all original ideas of what it should be. As will be seen by any one who is good enough to glance at it, a good deal of investigation and enquiry has been involved, and the enquiry has now and then led towards scientific matters. But the book does not profess to be scientific, and has no sort of claim to be conclusive or positive or exhaustive or didactic. It is meant to quicken interest in some of the many interesting

objects which are still to be found between Dee and Don ; to quicken interest is to effect an insurance against neglect or destruction. It is not meant for the experts on any of the many points touched ; but the writer has done his best to avoid misleading his reader, even when he has ventured upon fields where experts will not tread. It is the work of one who knows just enough about it to know how little he knows. Unfortunately on one point of great importance in dealing with old stones, namely petrology, he knows nothing at all. How great a loss this is, both to the interest in the stone circles and to the reputation of their prehistoric builders for skill and knowledge, is pointed out in the course of the book.

The largest Plates are almost all of them from photographs specially taken by the local photographer Mr R. Benzie of Dunecht. The half-size Plates are almost all of them from photographs presented by Mr James Ritchie of Hawthorn Cottage, Port Elphinstone, Inverurie, who has given learned help in all directions for which the writer is deeply grateful. His best thanks are due also, and are here tendered, to the authorities of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, for allowing him to make use of their articles on several of the stone circles of Aberdeenshire, and for putting at his disposal plans of circles from their *Proceedings*, and their block of the Maiden Stone, Plate LVI. The writer has been advised on Gaelic points by Dr Sinton of Dores Manse, Inverness, and has received valuable help of many kinds from many others ; to some of whom his thanks are expressed in the text. It will be obvious to the reader that Sir Norman Lockyer's investigations and theories have added greatly to the interest of the Aberdeenshire circles. The writer has quoted largely and gratefully from his important volume on Stonehenge and other stone monuments, in the second edition of which the Aberdeenshire stone circles are dealt with. But earnest gratitude does not include the acceptance of a range of dates from 2000 B.C. to 1300 B.C. for fourteen of the circles dealt with, as shewn on page 33, depending as it does upon the supposition that fourteen great recumbent stones lie exactly in the line in which they did lie, when first placed where they now are, at the dates named. Not that the dates are in themselves even improbable. It will be seen in the concluding chapter that elaborate investigations are leading to a claim that the astronomer-priests in this country had registration-marks on their stones which enabled them to predict eclipses from 2250 B.C. to 1000 B.C.

G. F. BROWNE.

2 CAMPDEN HOUSE ROAD,  
LONDON, W. 8.  
22 June 1921.

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## CHAPTER I

Characteristic antiquities of this district of Aberdeenshire.—Circles, ogams, sculptures.—Uniqueness of the Circles.—Druids' Temples.—Importance of druidism.—The Magic Art.—Julius Cæsar's description of the Druids.—Human sacrifices.—Comparison with Welsh and Irish Druids.—The elder Pliny's account.—King Alfred's Druids.—Accounts by Tacitus.—Human sacrifice by Rhadagaisus.—By the Aztecs.—Zoroastrianism.

THE district of Aberdeenshire in which the great hill fort of Echt is situated has three special characteristics, each of which is redolent of antiquity. They are, (1) the presence of a large number of stone circles unique in type; (2) the presence of a number of examples of so-called Pictish sculptures on rude stones, apparently casual stones though possibly boundary or memorial stones; (3) the presence of two of the most important of the few ogam inscriptions found in Caledonia, and a third of less importance perhaps but not of less interest. In a class entirely by itself, quite unique, is the minuscule inscription which is found in connection with the longest of the ogam inscriptions, on a great stone now in the grounds of the Gordons of Newton by Inch.

The Aberdeenshire stone circles will occupy by far the largest part of our space. We have described them as unique, because, so far as we are informed, no one as yet has found and published any example elsewhere of a striking feature common to all of them. This is, a great Recumbent Stone, lying tangentially on the circumference of the circle, weighing many tons; with two high pillar stones standing on the circumference of the circle one at each end of the Recumbent Stone, as Flankers or supporters; not as props, not of necessity even in contact with the ends of the Recumbent Stone. It is evident, on the face of it, that this curious and striking feature presents a series of problems of great interest, and presumably of at least considerable importance. What race of men set them up? Where did they learn the plan? What was their purpose? How did they use the stones, when they had set them up? What sort of date can we assign to them? How did they fall into disuse? The sight of them tends to set the archaeologist imagination running riot.

It is natural to ask the question, why should there be this curious difference between the stone circles of this one district of Aberdeenshire and the circles of other parts of Pictish Caledonia?

One answer is, that there are other examples of curious differences in regard to the use and arrangement of rude stones in districts bordering upon one another. Thus the late Dr Tristram, in his *Land of Moab*, pages 300–302, speaks of "the three classes of primæval monuments in Moab," the stone circles, the dolmens, and the cairns. They all exist, he says, in great abundance.

They exist in three different parts of the country, but never side by side. The cairns are exclusively in the east, on the spurs of the Arabian range; the stone circles south of the Callirrhoë; the dolmens north of that valley. His surmise is that this fact may indicate three neighbouring tribes, co-existent in the pre-historic period, each with different funeral or religious customs.

We find a curious parallel to this in Devon and Cornwall. Stone rows, called avenues, are common on Dartmoor and almost unknown in Cornwall. Cromlechs are common in West Cornwall and only one genuine example is mentioned on Dartmoor.

Similarly it is said that in the Morbihan while stone rows and cromlechs are common, and there are stone circles in connection with stone rows, circles independent of stone rows are all but unknown there.

But while that is so, the difference with which we are concerned is deeper and more subtle. It is a racial—or rather a tribal—difference, and that in regard to deep-seated feelings and views of the manner of approaching the gods of nature. The Aberdonians might fairly say that their predecessors, if not in blood at least in locality, were religious—or superstitious—beyond other Picts. Looked at more closely, we may say that the traditional division of Pictland into seven provinces, and the actual differences in the stone records of religious worship in adjoining parts of the same province, indicate the inherence in the race of disruptive tendencies, tendencies of isolation, of having no superiors, indeed of having no equals. This is shewn perhaps in its clearest and most recent development, the clan jealousies of the Highlanders, which came to a head in comparatively modern history when the ancient race of the Caledonian kings died out, and shewed itself fatally when their immediate descendants ceased to reign over North Britain and South Britain combined.

The Roman grammarian Festus, writing on the Latin word *sacellum* about A.D. 150, tells us that *sacella* are small places, consecrated to gods, without a roof. Hence the Latin dictionary gives as the meaning of *sacellum* (literally the diminutive of *sacrum* a shrine), “a small uncovered place consecrated to a divinity.” That we may take to have been the original root idea of a stone circle; with the correlative idea of the exclusion of hostile powers from the area,—“without are dogs.” This does not at all imply that there was a continuous fence all round. The twelve stones, or some such number, set on the circumference of the circle, were the adequate symbol of exclusion. Mystery can be stronger than a continuous wall of stones. Tacitus tells us (*Germania*, c. ix) that the Germans think it derogatory to the majesty of the heavenly beings to enclose them within walls.

We have said “the twelve stones or some such number.” We find in the book of Joshua, chapter iv, two special mentions of twelve stones, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel. “Take you twelve men, out of every

tribe a man, and command them, Take you out of the midst of Jordan, where the priests' feet stand firm, twelve stones upon your shoulders, and carry them over Jordan. And they carried them over to the place where they lodged and laid them down there; and those twelve stones did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.... And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan where the feet of the priests stood firm, and they are there to this day." Is it a mere coincidence that the only circles of those now under consideration which are complete, Sin Hinny and Auchorthies, have twelve stones each?

One result of rather careful enquiry on the spot and in such records as are available stands out clearly. It is impossible to laugh at traditions of Druids and Druidism, as some learned folk have been accustomed to laugh. As we shall see when we come to descriptions of the circles, the regular name for the circles of Aberdeenshire, recurring in parish after parish, was "Druids' Temples," in the great collection of parochial records and descriptions known as the Old Statistical Account of Scotland, published in and about 1794. It is out of the question to imagine that some one had set to work to invent the idea of "Druids' Temples," and had persuaded the common folk to create in a whole large district a new name for a very old and very prominent feature in their everyday life, which certainly had an old name of some kind among them. And this remark by no means applies only to the district under consideration. A short drive out of Inverness, the spot on which Broichan the arch-druid of the Pictish king Brude, and Saint Columba the arch-saint of the Lord and Saviour, fought out their stand-up fight, brings you to Glendruid. If you push on, you come to Druids' Temple Farm, and in a wood near by you find the Temple, three concentric rings of stones, respectively 12 ft., 43 ft., and 77 ft. in circumference. Not very far from that, about a mile from Ness Castle and near Cullaird, there is a curious little "Druids' Temple" of nine stones, about 22 ft. in diameter, with two large stones 6 ft. apart looking very like the Flankers of our Aberdeenshire Recumbent Stone but with no surviving indication of the presence of such a stone. At Clava, on the Nairn, there is a large group of Druids' Temples. Thus the designation "Druids' Temple" in the land of the northern Picts of Caledonia is far too general to have been a comparatively late invention. We must take it that the inhabitants have through the ages retained the true tradition that these were the sacred places of worship when Druidism, or art magic, was the national religion. It is not easy to imagine a later origin for this long series of "Temples." So long ago as 1692, Dr Gordon of Aberdeen wrote that the general tradition throughout the district was that they were used as places of worship in heathen times. As we shall see, "heathen worship" in those districts certainly meant Druidism, or by its other name the practice of magical art, "Druid" and "magician" being convertible terms.

We shall make a very great mistake if we ridicule or under-rate the power of the pagan priests whom our Christian predecessors found everywhere in possession. Classical mythology treats the gods of Greece and Rome as intensely important beings; and their priests were dominant. We must assign a like position to the gods and the priests of our pagan predecessors. When Apollo was consulted in Diocletian's presence (about A.D. 290), an answer was given in a hollow voice, not by the priest but by Apollo himself, that the oracles were restrained from answering truly; and the priests said this pointed to the Christians. And when the entrails of victims were examined in augury on another of Diocletian's expeditions, and found not to present the wonted marks, the chief soothsayer declared that the presence of Christians caused the failure. Just such scenes were enacted, with at least as much of tragic earnestness, when Patrick worsted the Druid Lochra in the hall of Tara, or when Columba baffled the devices of Broichan, the arch-druid of Brude the Pictish king.

We have a very curious and instructive use of the word *druí* in a prayer attributed to Columba at a critical turning-point of his life. "*My druí*," he is made to say in a very early account of his doings on a great occasion, "*My druí* is the Son of God." He evidently regarded the *druí* as meaning one that worked wonders. It is yet another argument that the system of druidism was in itself not only the development of astronomy and natural philosophy, but also a preparation for the acceptance of the loftiest idea of the one Supreme Almighty God.

It seems to be practically impossible to resist the conviction that a sacrificial altar was a main part of the religious worship of our pagan predecessors in this island. Nor can it be doubted that human sacrifices were the sacrifices most highly regarded by them. Nor again can it be doubted that human sacrifices were frequent. If a man felt seriously ill, or found himself in sudden danger in war, the recognised course of procedure was to sacrifice a human being, or if that could not be conveniently effected, to vow that a human sacrifice should be offered as soon as it could be arranged. Criminals were the natural victims; but if such could not be had, an innocent victim must be procured. Not only was this true of our predecessors in this island, but it was specially true of them. Cæsar, writing a generation before the birth of Christ, tells us that any one who wished really to study the magic art with its human sacrifices went to Britain to study it. The elder Pliny, writing two generations after the birth of Christ, tells us that the people of Britain carried the magic art and its human sacrifices so far and with so great ceremonial, that it might have been supposed that the Britons had taught its practice to the Persians, though it was well known that the Persians learned it from Zoroaster in prehistoric times. Cæsar and Pliny call the priests of these magic arts and sacrifices Druids.

To shew the full force of what these two very careful observers and recorders say, it will be well to give the whole of their record, including that which affects our special point, the practice of human sacrifice<sup>1</sup>.

Julius Cæsar, *de Bello Gallico*, vi. 13, 14, 15.

Throughout Gaul there are two classes of persons of definite account and dignity.... One consists of Druids, the other of Knights.

The Druids are concerned with divine worship, the due performance of public and private sacrifices, and the interpretation of religious matters; a great number of young men gather about them for the sake of instruction and hold them in great honour. They decide in almost all disputes, public and private. If any crime has been committed, if murder has been done (*caedes facta*), if there is any dispute about succession or boundaries, they decide it. They determine rewards and penalties. If any individual person, or any body of people, will not abide by their decision, they interdict them from sacrifices: this is their heaviest penalty. Those who are under interdict are counted among the impious and profane. All men avoid them, flee their presence and discourse, lest they get harm from their contact. Neither justice nor honour is open to them.

Among the druids one is chief, who has the highest authority among them. At his death, if any be pre-eminent he succeeds. If there are several with equal claim, they strive for the position as chief, appealing to the votes of the druids, sometimes resorting to armed force.

At a certain time of the year the druids meet in the territory of the Carnutes, which is reckoned to be the centre of the whole of Gaul, and hold session in a consecrated spot. Thither assemble from all sides all that have disputes, and they abide by the decisions and judgments of the druids.

It is believed that their discipline was found in Britain and brought thence into Gaul, and to this day those who wish to go more fully into the matter for the most part go to Britain for information.

It is the custom of the druids to abstain from war, and they do not pay war-taxes (*tributa*) as others do. They are exempt from military service and all public duties. Tempted by these advantages, many young men join them of their own accord to receive their training, many are sent by parents and relatives. They are said to learn a great number of verses in their schools, and some are said to remain under instruction for twenty years. It is a duty not to commit to writing the things that are taught, though in most other matters, and in their public and private accounts (*rationibus*), they make use of Greek letters.

This rule of not committing their teaching to writing I think they have instituted for two reasons. They do not wish that their teaching should become common property, and they do not wish the learners to rely upon writing and so neglect the cultivation of the memory. It does in fact usually happen that the assistance of writing tends to relax the attention of the student and the action of the memory.

The main doctrine which they seek to teach is that souls do not die, but after death

<sup>1</sup> We quote the passages which include Britain in their reference. Diodorus tells of the horrid cruelty and the large scale of human sacrifice among the Gauls by the Saronidae (Chaldæans). Strabo gives further detail. Suetonius tells of horrid cruelties. Dion Chrysostom tells that the druid priests exercised royal authority and the Celtic kings were their servants.

pass from one to another. This belief they hold to be the greatest incentive to valour, as the fear of death is thereby cast aside.

Besides this, they have many discussions touching the stars and their motion, the size of the universe and of the earth, the nature of things, the force and power of the immortal gods; and these they hand on to the young men.

The whole nature of the Gauls is greatly devoted to religious observances. On this account, those who are smitten with grievous maladies or are engaged in the perils of battle, either offer human sacrifices, *homines immolant*, or vow that they will do so. They employ the druids as the ministers of these sacrifices, believing that unless for a man's life a man's life be paid, the majesty of the immortal gods may not be appeased; and like sacrifices of a public character are performed. Others have *simulacra* of immense size, whose members, woven with twigs, they fill with living men and set on fire, and the men perish in a sheet of flame. They believe that the execution of those who have been caught in the act of theft or robbery or some crime is more pleasing to the immortal gods; but when the supply of malefactors fails, they resort to the sacrifice of the innocent.

Julius Cæsar's account of the functions of the druids does not agree with what we know of the druids of Ireland and the druids of Wales. He tells us that there were only two classes of persons that really counted, druids and knights. The druids conducted public worship and public and private sacrifices, and interpreted religious matters. But that was very far from being their one function. They decided in almost all disputes, public and private. We cannot say whether Cæsar meant that they decided all disputes except those which went to the arbitration of war, or whether he was thinking of the rules of classical times, where the head of the state could settle cases which might arise, with a few special exceptions which went before a general council. On the whole the former of those two explanations seems the more probable. The penalty of disobedience to the decision of the druids was excommunication, "interdiction from sacrifices," a very telling idea, evidencing the primary importance of sacrifices in their religion.

Further, they were the repositories of bardic knowledge. Great numbers of verses were taught in their schools. These verses must not be committed to writing. They were so numerous that the full teaching sometimes occupied twenty years.

We might have supposed that the young men who desired not to rank among the warrior class and resorted to this instruction as an exemption from war tax and war service, would form a separate class. But it seems quite clear from Cæsar's account that this was not so. There was no such separate class. They all counted as druids.

This would appear not to have been the case in Wales and in Ireland. In Ireland there were druid priests and there were judges, *brehons*, as a separate class. In Wales there were druid priests and there were bards, apparently as a separate class.

On these points we may quote a passage from Mr J. W. Willis Bund's *The Celtic Church in Wales*<sup>1</sup>:

"One instance of the difference between Wales and Ireland will be seen in the position of the Druids and Bards in Wales, as compared with the Druids and Brehons in Ireland, after the establishment of Christianity. In both Ireland and Wales the Druid and Brehon, or Druid and Bard, lost part of the power which the Christian priest acquired. But the Welsh Druid never took the place that the Irish Druid did after the establishment of Christianity. In Ireland, both Druid and Brehon continued for some time to exercise their restricted rights; the Brehon lingered on to a comparatively modern date. But in Wales, while the Bards continued, the Druid dropped at once into the position of a second rate magician, and gradually lost all power and influence."

Pliny's statement is contained in the 30th book of his Natural History, where he writes of religion and its connections with the art of medicine, with science, with magic. He appears to be chiefly concerned with magic. This art he says undoubtedly arose in Persia, derived from Zoroaster. The Roman historian Orosius says (*King Alfred's Books, Orosius*, page 96) that Ninus the king of Assyria began to reign one thousand three hundred years before the building of Rome, that is, 2053 years before Christ. Clinton's calculations give the date as 2182 B.C. As one of the great events of the reign of Ninus, Orosius relates that he slew Zoroaster the king of the Bactrians, who was reported to be the first discoverer of the magic art<sup>2</sup>. It may seem unnecessary to say that the historic Zoroaster is placed some fifteen or sixteen hundred years later, about the time of the prophet Daniel. We return to this on page 11.

In connection with our main contention regarding druidism, it is very interesting to find that King Alfred uses the Anglo-Saxon *dry* for sorcerer or magician. The *y* would be written in rune as a *u* enclosing an *i*. Thus the king uses the same word as *druī*, for *druidh*, to describe a magician. Later on in his "Orosius" the king uses *mid dry-cræftum* for "with sorceries."

Pliny proceeds to describe the spread of the art magic. He does not mention human sacrifices, but he suddenly names them as a matter of course, as if they were the pith and chief feature of the whole thing. 'At length, he says, in the 657th year of the City, the Senate made a decree "that there be no sacrifice of a man," *ne homo immolaretur*! It—apparently the magical art including human sacrifice—held the Galliae also, and that to our own time. For the reign of Tiberius did away with their Druids and that class of sooth-sayers and medicine men. It crossed the sea also, and at the present time Britain celebrates it with astonishing zeal, with so great ceremonies that Britain

<sup>1</sup> London, D. Nutt, 1897, page 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Magicae, ut ferunt, artis repertorem*, Or. 1. 4. 3.

might seem to have taught it to the Persians. It is impossible to estimate how much is owed to the Romans, who destroyed the monstrous forms in which it was held a most religious act to slaughter men, and most salutary to be ordered.' These last words no doubt refer to Cæsar's remarks on the "figures" in which men were enclosed for slaughter, and to the custom of ordering a human sacrifice if you didn't feel well or were greatly afraid.

Julius Cæsar himself, by the way, violated the decree *ne homo immolaretur*, for we are told in Dio that he ordered two men to be slaughtered on the Campus Martius, as a religious ceremony.

Pliny has referred to the action of Tiberius. We learn from Tacitus<sup>1</sup> that in the time of Tiberius, A.D. 15-38, soothsayers and sorcerers had become a public danger. Libo Drusus, a member of an exalted family, was accused of encouraging Chaldæan soothsayers, the rites of the magicians, luxury, and lust. He put an end to himself. The Senate passed a decree for the expulsion of mathematicians (the astronomers and astrologers) and magicians from Italy. Two of the number were put to death, Lucius Pituanus being cast down from the rock, Publius Marcius being put to death "in the ancient manner" by the consuls at the Esquiline gate on sound of trumpet. Some years later, an illustrious man of great wealth was got rid of by a charge of magic arts; he put himself to death.

The late Dean Liddell set out the passages from Greek and Latin writers which speak of human sacrifices<sup>2</sup>, and argued that they did not prove "that human sacrifices were in use among the Romans," "human sacrifices" meaning with him "innocent victims offered to appease the wrath of the gods." He took Pliny's statement that in 97 B.C. a decree was made by the Senate *ne homo immolaretur* to have reference to certain barbarous practices connected with the introduction of magic arts of foreign origin.

That explanation suits our general argument very well.

Of self-sacrifice among the Romans Suetonius (iv. 27) tells a quaint story. The Emperor Caligula was a general favourite on his accession. He had a serious illness, and his friends offered to expose their lives in the Arena for his recovery, while others of them vowed their lives to the infernal deities in exchange for the Emperor's life. Caligula recovered; and, being a stickler in such things, he compelled his friends to fulfil their vows.

Both in his *Annals* and in his *Histories* Tacitus<sup>3</sup> makes special mention of Druidæ as the leaders of the people in war and in politics in Britain. The Roman governor Paulinus Suetonius, having had to deal in the east of Britain with an outraged British queen, had next to deal with very violent British women in the west. In each case the women were almost too much for him.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, ii. 27, ii. 32, xii. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, xl. 242-256.

<sup>3</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv. 30, *Hist.* iv. 54.



Suetonius had found that the island Mona, which we English call by our own name Anglesey, was the resort of turbulent fugitives. He made preparations for attacking it. Ships landed his foot soldiers; his horsemen swam the straits. But Britons met them on the shore, excited to resistance by *mænad* women, Fury-like, rushing about among them with blazing torches, streaming hair, and vehement gestures and incantations, the *Druidæ*, hands raised to heaven, uttering dire prayers. The Roman soldiery were arrested in their advance. The leader himself had to call upon them not to be afraid of a pack of women and fanatics. They nerved themselves to advance, bore down the resistance of the Britons, and burned them with their own torches. He did what he could to stamp out druidism, with its cruel superstitions, for its priests held it a sacred duty to offer sacrifice by pouring the blood of captives on their altars<sup>1</sup> and to seek omens from their gods on the entrails of men. This evidence of blood-stained druid altars must not be left out of our consideration. In the *Histories* we learn from Tacitus, who accompanied his father-in-law Agricola in his difficult task of governing Britain A.D. 78–84, a period which included the great invasion of Caledonia, that when news reached Britain of successes against Rome by various tribes, the *Druidæ*, with their vain superstitions, chanted hymns of the coming time when the Transalpine peoples should possess the world. We find women druids in Ireland, the *ban-druí*.

We find also that in A.D. 373 the Roman emperor Valens committed great excesses at Antioch under the plea of suppressing magic art. It may safely be said that Paganism put all its strength in its conflict with Christianity into the claim of mysterious power of divination and command of the processes of nature. The struggle for dominance between Columba and Broichan was in little the real struggle between Christianity and Paganism.

We must not pass without notice the difficulties attaching to the idea of magic and magician. But, equally, we must not dwell upon them. It has been said by a recent writer that the problem of the definition of magic constitutes a veritable storm-centre in the anthropological literature of the present day<sup>2</sup>. That—with which we venture to agree—is a fair indication of the difficulties to which we have referred.

The word Magic comes of course from the Magi of the Persians, and it has been taken to refer to the religion, learning, and occult practices, of the sect of Zoroaster. Hence the word was from the first used in an unfavourable sense in the various languages in which we find it, and this unfavourable sense of witchcraft it has never lost in European languages. Bacon endeavoured to attach to it, as its natural meaning, the force of natural science in practical operation; and when in this present book we speak of magicians and medicine

<sup>1</sup> Thus the "altar" was not the "slaughter stone."

<sup>2</sup> R. R. Marett, in Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics, under the heading *Magic*.

men, we are not really going beyond that idea, however much of imposture there may have been in their manner of working upon the ignorant minds of those who looked to them as their guides. A writer of the highest discretion and distinction<sup>1</sup> holding the view that the analogy between the magical and the scientific conception of the world is close, has developed the interesting summary that magic is next of kin to science but is a bastard sister. One of his humblest admirers is inclined to doubt the illegitimacy of origin, while allowing the fundamental differences between the sisters in their methods of operation. The further, and fascinating, question of the similarities and the dissimilarities of claim, as between the magician and the Christian priest, is clearly outside the modest aim of this book.

We have an appropriate example of the late continuance of human sacrifices in the *History of Orosius against the Pagans*. Orosius was writing of events in his own time and under his own observation in Rome. His *History* ended with A.D. 417. He is telling of the two brother-kings of the Goths, and of the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410. We may note that about the time of the conclusion of Orosius's *History*, Ninian was preparing his mission to that branch of the Southern Picts that was seated in the parts of Galloway ; and we are not aware of any former mission that should have put an end to the worst features of their old established discipline of sacrifices. The same Roman commander who had fought against Alaric was the commander who invaded Caledonia and fought against the Northern Picts as recorded by his companion the poet Claudian<sup>2</sup>. This is what Orosius wrote<sup>3</sup> :—

Shortly afterwards, Alaric became a Christian. Rhadagaisus remained a heathen, and daily sacrificed to idols by slaying men ; and he was always most pleased if they were Romans.

A curious and instructive development of the practice and meaning of human sacrifice is to be found in the remarkable manuscript and pictorial histories of the Aztecs which form part of Lord Cowdray's Mexican treasures, and are now being catalogued and indexed by Mr T. A. Joyce at the British Museum. Mr Joyce's book on Mexico is well known, but should be much better known. His clear and full knowledge was so kindly put at the disposal of this present writer that a few main facts can be simply stated.

The Aztec development was very late, about 1400 A.D. They were wandering hunters, and they came upon an agricultural people and took possession. They appear to have brought with them the cult of stellar deities ; but the Sun God was the centre of their highly developed system of human sacrifice. The Sun God needed perpetual sacrifice of human heart and blood, to keep him strong enough to perform his daily labour of heating and fructifying the world.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. G. Frazer.

<sup>2</sup> See page 128.

<sup>3</sup> vii. 37. See my *King Alfred's Books*, 1920, page 129.

Hence it came that war was with them only a factor in their religious rites, the perpetual sacrificial offerings of human blood and life. They fought, not to kill, though that would mean the shedding of human blood, the destroying of human life, but to take prisoners, that the shedding of blood and the slaughtering might be a religious act, ceremonially performed by the priest. The victim was painted the proper death colours and tufted with bits of eagle down. He was laid on his back, stretched out on the Sacrificial Stone. Four priests held his feet and his hands. The chief priest gashed him across the chest with an obsidian knife, tore out his heart, and flung it and the life-blood on the ground.

On page 7 we have referred to the date of Zoroaster, and on page 9 to his supposed responsibility for the more evil of the occult practices of the magicians.

The recent studies of Dr Rendel Harris and Dr James Hope Moulton, both of Cambridge, have brought illumination upon the date and history of their religious hero Zarathushtra, whose name is classicalised into Zoroaster<sup>1</sup>. The tradition of mediaeval Persia gave his date as 660-583 B.C., about Daniel's time, but his era was probably some four or five centuries earlier. The most recent view is that he was the earliest religious teacher whose name is known to us among the Aryan-speaking peoples. As to his responsibility for the evil practices of black magic, the probability seems to be that he came as a reformer to a people holding the ancient nature-worship, whose gods were Sky and Earth, Sun and Moon, Fire, Rivers, Winds, and their priests were as the medicine-men and sorcerers of the savages of New Guinea, except that in New Guinea they take no risks; they have two clans of sorcerers, the one to give rain and produce fruitful crops, the other to give poison and impose slow-working curses. In our view, when we deal with the worst features of the druids of Cæsar and Pliny in this island of ours, whether the British or the Caledonian parts, we are dealing with pre-Aryan practices, naturally bound up with the nature-worship of savages in all ages, indigenous in savage lands, not needing importation from Persia or elsewhere. The magicians who presided over the horrid rites here were as far off from the rites of Zoroastrianism with its ultimate triumph of the Good as they were from the spirit of the Three whose incessant study of the heavens and of the records of the ages enabled them by some means mysterious to us to offer gold and frankincense and myrrh at the cradle of the Infant Saviour.

<sup>1</sup> See Dr Moulton's Hibbert Lectures for 1912 on *Early Zoroastrianism*, and his posthumous work *The Treasure of the Magi*, Oxford University Press.

## CHAPTER II

Druidism the religion of a very early race in Caledonia.—Columba's contest with the Pictish Druids.—An altar essential in a Druids' Temple.—Old Testament illustrations.—Other Oriental illustrations.—The worship of stones as gods.—Meteoric stones.—Two main elements in our early heathenism.—The one Aryan, the other pre-Aryan.—The pre-Aryan Magic Art.—Christian use of pagan religious sites.—Cessation of human sacrifice.—Altars still necessary.—Continuity of religious worship at "the stones."—Earnestness of pagan worship.—Worship of gods of nature a preparation for the worship of God.—The LORD, *our* God.—Meaning of "religion," "pagan," "heathen," "superstition."—Survival of the black art.

THE greater part of the Britons with whom Cæsar came in contact were comparatively recent immigrants from Belgic Gaul. His description, and Pliny's description, of the great ceremonial worship of the Druids in this island must be supposed to apply to the earlier races of occupation of the land, those who had not as yet been dispossessed by the later comers and driven off to further parts. There is every reason to suppose that Druidism was the form of worship among those mysterious people the Picts, with whom we shall have so much to do in our enquiry into the Antiquities of our special part of Aberdeenshire. We can carry the history of dominant Druidism among the Northern Picts down to the later part of the sixth century.

Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, was the first cousin four times removed of his predecessor St Columba. He was the ninth Abbot, A.D. 679–704, Columba the first Abbot having held that office from 593 to 597, in which year Augustine came to Kent.

In the first chapter of his Life of Columba Adamnan brings on to his canvas both Picts and Magi, that is, Druids. Columba had apparently come by sea to spend a few days among the Picts to the east of Inverness where he had established himself, and miraculously sailed back against a contrary wind to confound the magi.

On another occasion (i. 37) Columba's magnificent voice was used to defeat the Druids. His voice was so remarkable that hearers a thousand paces off could distinguish by the separate syllables what verse he was singing. We can practically locate the spot where the power of his voice defeated the Druids. The Saint and a few brethren were singing the evening praises of God outside the king's fortress, close to the fortress, and the Druids came upon them and made as much noise as they could, to prevent the Divine praise being heard by the gentile people. We may fairly place the Saint on the south of the Castle Hill, and bring the disturbing Druids from their neighbouring head-quarters among the noble stones of the Druids' Temple, still standing some two miles off. When the Saint found what they were doing, he

began to sing the forty-fifth Psalm, "My heart is inditing of a good matter"; and in a marvellous manner his voice was so lifted up in the air that it sounded like dreadful thunder, and the king and the people were stricken with intolerable fear.

Adamnan has two long chapters on Columba's dealings with Broichan, the chief Druid, the foster-father of Brude the king reigning at Inverness. In each case the Saint had the better of the Druid, and in the end Brude was converted. According to Bede, it was this Brude king of the Picts who gave the island Hy to Columba. An Irish record, less early, makes the gift come from the king of the Dalriad Scots, which is locally more probable, but Dr Reeves maintained the other view, Brude having recently inflicted a severe check upon the king of the Dalriad Scots. We have to notice at a later period the continual strife between the eastern Picts and the western Scots who were called the Scots of Dalriada.

The strife between Columba and Broichan may serve to remind us that in our wonderful treasure-house of detailed records of Egypt in early times, in the books we call Genesis and Exodus, we have this very same picture of the strife between the servants of the true God and the servants of the false gods, with the eventual discomfiture of the false. The chief officers of Pharaoh's household, and later on Pharaoh himself, dreamed remarkable dreams. They had official interpreters of dreams, but they lost confidence in them by reason of their failure to interpret. Joseph had in charge the chief officers of the household, and finding them troubled by dreams he interpreted their dreams, and his interpretation of life to the one and death to the other came true. Pharaoh, much troubled in turn by a dream, sought interpretation from Joseph with such great success that he put it to his chief men, "Can we find such an one as this, in whom the spirit of God is?"; and he set him over the kingdom.

In course of time oppression came, and Moses arose. He demanded relief for his oppressed fellow-countrymen and it was denied. In the course of time, Pharaoh determined to put a stop to his importunity, and demanded as credentials that Moses should perform a miracle. Moses cast down his rod and it became a serpent. The magicians did the like, but Moses' serpent swallowed theirs. Moses turned the waters of the rivers and lakes into blood; the sorcerers and magicians did the like. Moses brought forth frogs; so did the magicians. And so it went on till Moses did that which, when once done, could not be done again. All the first born were slain. The magicians were completely beaten and Pharaoh gave in. The art magic of the pagan gods could not prevail against Jehovah, Israel's God.

We have noted the necessity of an altar in the places of worship of the Druids, and its difference from the slaughter stone, a difference which appears to be frequently overlooked by opponents of the "sacrificial stone" theory.

It has been suggested that if the Aberdeenshire Recumbent Stones really had been intended for altars, more shapely stones would have been selected, and there would at least have been some signs of the removal of irregularities of surface. But here, as so often, the Old Testament comes to our help. In Exodus xx. 25 we read:—"And if thou wilt make ME an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." Further, the altar was to be a Recumbent Stone, the surface of which could be reached by a man standing on the ground (xx. 26).

It is tempting to suggest that the two supporters which in every case the Recumbent Stone has or has had, are the representatives of the sacred tree which stood by the Recumbent Sacrificial Stone in early Israel. It was rather the symbol of a tree than a tree itself. A tree could not always be found where it was wished to have an altar, and a pole was used, placed by the Recumbent Stone, to represent the sacred tree. When Deborah judged Israel and was the head priestess, she had a real sacred tree, a prominent tree.

The word which occurs and recurs in the Old Testament among idolatrous objects, the "groves," is a mistranslation of *Asherah*. The Asherah were sacred poles.

The Syrians and Phoenicians commonly erected such pillars in front of their temples. They stood for deity, and they are supposed to have been a feature of the phallic (sexual) worship of which there is more and more evidence in the ancient world. The Syrian god Melkart was represented by two such pillars in front of his temple at Tyre<sup>1</sup>. Before the temples at Paphos and Hierapolis there were two pillars. It has been suggested that Hiram set up Jachin (he shall establish) and Boaz (in it is strength) as an ornamental adjunct to the temple of Jehovah, because the pagan temples he had studied had such pairs of pillars in front of them.

When we adduce parallelisms between our surviving stone-circles and the paganism which preceded and survived alongside of Jehovah-worship, it is not at all necessary to imagine that our stone-circle ancestors were the far-off representatives of the stone-worship peoples of Palestine. It is quite likely that they were contemporaries, and that the world was a stone-worship world over vast areas of its surface. In other words, the outward expression of fear and love of the sun deities and the star deities and the nature deities took the same form in the mind of man in at least many of the habitable areas of the world; and set, by transmigration of tribes, an example that was grasped at in regions where it had not been spontaneously developed. There must have been spaces set apart as sacred to the several deities. They must by some outward mark have been set apart, so that all could recognise them. The one perfect form and shape for such purpose was a circle. The one natural manner

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 44. Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, under *Boaz*.

of setting apart a circle was by setting stones on its circumference. Either at its centre, or much more probably at the point furthest from the place of entry, there must have been an altar stone.

Sir J. G. Frazer mentions a point which is illustrated by a local tradition connected with at least one stone circle; it is "the place where the people used to pray to the stones." The idea, he says, of a stone tenanted by a god or a powerful spirit was not peculiar to ancient Israel. It has been shared in many lands. Arabs and Greeks worshipped stones. In the older time all the Greeks worshipped unwrought stones instead of images. In the market place of Pharae in Achaia there were thirty square stones to each of which the people gave the name of a god<sup>1</sup>. In the temple at Olmones in Boeotia the god was represented not by an image but in the old fashion by an unwrought stone. At Thespieae in Boeotia, Love was honoured above all gods, and Lysippus and Praxiteles wrought glorious images of the deity in bronze and marble; but the people paid their devotions to an uncouth idol of the god in the shape of a rough stone<sup>2</sup>. On a hill in Radnorshire there are two standing stones, 6 feet high, called "the gods," and the farm is called in Welsh the gods-hill farm.

The worship of rude stones, as representing or containing a deity is supposed to have come from the fall of meteoric stones, which the ancients naturally regarded with deep wonder, and imagined to be representations of deities sent down from heaven to man.

Among the many remarkable facts we find recorded in the mine of rare information which we call the Acts of the Apostles, we have the town clerk of Ephesus reminding his fellow-citizens that every one knew their city to be "the temple-keeper of the great Artemis and of the heaven-sent"; the image that had fallen from the gods, or from Jupiter, a stone of grotesque character. The worship paid to this heaven-sent stone had no doubt more to do with the worship of the oriental Astarte, Ashtoreth, the chief female divinity of the Phoenicians, than with a goddess of the Romans.

Is it permissible, in connection with the idea of stones with in-dwelling life or power of life, to wonder whither John Baptist took up his quarters in the wilderness at some well-known circle of great stones, and made reference to ancient tradition when he said, "God is able of these stones—*de lapidibus istis*, ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων—to raise up children unto Abraham"? We may ask a like question at a much earlier time, when Jacob after his great vision took the stone and set it up as a pillar, and anointed it, and declared it to be "the house of God."

It has been suggested that the chance resemblance of a rough stone or a trunk of wood to a human being was the origin of sculpture and of idols. The late Sir Henry James made a picture of the stones of Stennis as a group of

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, vii. 22. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, ix. 27. 1-3.

sailors in white duck trousers, the trousers being the light colour of the lower part of the stones after the removal of the soil that had gradually grown up around the bases of the stones.

Sir E. A. Wallis Budge has put on record<sup>1</sup> an opinion of the eminent Oriental scholar Dr Birch in connection with the religious beliefs of the various races of men of the East and of the West:—"He thought that each race in the world possessed beliefs peculiar to itself, and that, owing to differences in physical constitution and in mental characteristics and linguistic difficulties, no one race could ever be brought to understand thoroughly and completely the beliefs of the other." But this would not militate against the idea that various races of men may develop the same outward manner of expressing their various beliefs. The varieties of mind are endless. The methods of giving outward expression to the varieties of mind are fairly numerous, but they are soon exhausted, and recurrence of method is necessary.

In his two remarkable volumes on the Lives of the Saints of Hibernia<sup>2</sup>, Dr Charles Plummer draws an illuminating distinction between two main elements in Celtic heathenism, and notes a far-reaching difference between their respective racial origins.

The two elements were, (1) a system of nature-worship with departmental gods, of whom the sun and fire god was the chief, and (2) a system of magic, or druidism. The former of these was a development of the religion which the Celts brought with them from the original home of the Aryans, wherever that may have been; the latter was the religion of the pre-Aryans whom they found occupying the lands which they invaded, and whom they largely absorbed. The literature shews that the latter element was the more permanent; indeed in a sense it may be said never to have died out. The Christian teachers never took the line of denying the reality of its existence. It was gentile or diabolic knowledge, powerfully ranged against themselves.

In the Scandinavian world, the Finns, a pre-Aryan race, were the chief professors of magic, so that Finn and sorcerer are practically synonymous. The Irish race the Tuatha Dé Danann were said to have learned their magic arts in the north. They went to the northern islands of the world to learn druidism and gentilism and diabolic science, so that they were knowing in respect of every craft. The Irish went to Scotland (Alba) to learn the poetry so closely connected with druidism. Druids of Alba visited Ireland.

In the legends of the introduction of Christianity into Ireland, the druids meet us at every turn, as the chief if not the only opponents of the new faith. Whether the druids were themselves of Celtic descent or not, druidism itself is now generally accepted as pre-Aryan, part of the great magical system of

<sup>1</sup> *By Nile and Tigris*, i. 49. John Murray, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Oxford, 1910, i. cxxxiii, clviii, etc.



thought which spread westward from some Eastern centre, possibly Babylonia. The craft was frequently hereditary in our islands; it was freely exercised by women. The bandrui (woman-druid) frequently appears.

The Irish legends of the introduction of Christianity are late, dating from a time when the dominance of Christianity was and had long been an accomplished fact. If they had been earlier, we should no doubt have heard much more of the up-hill fight than we do hear, much more of the adoption by the new faith of places and details of the old.

We do not find evidence that the practice of human sacrifice was continued by the priests of the art magic down to St Columba's time. Adamnan, abbot of Iona, of Columba's own family, who wrote the exceedingly valuable *Life of his predecessor and relative*, must have known of it if it had been so. He would certainly have given it a prominent place in his careful record of the testing strife between Columba and the arch-druid of the Pictish king seated at Inverness. King Aldfrith of Northumbria, who was educated in Ireland his mother's home and brought thence to succeed his step-brother, would certainly have made it known at Wearmouth and Jarrow. Bede would certainly have made much of it in his lengthy account of Adamnan's visit to king Aldfrith in Bede's own time and of the contents of Adamnan's writings. Human sacrifice did not continue to exist, did not stand in the way of reconciliation between the old and the new, was not an element of difficulty in the way of the Christian priest who took possession of the sacred place of the old faith. So far as a tradition of the black past survived, it would serve as a help to the priest when he taught the efficacy of the Saving Victim.

It is an interesting fact that we have in England a direct and general example of the continuity of sacredness attached to particular places of worship when the religion which had made them sacred was done away. Gregory, the Bishop of Rome who sent the first effective mission to our pagan ancestors, advised the destruction of the pagan temples. But almost immediately after, he wrote to the chief of his mission that where the temples were of a solid character he should retain them, consecrate them, and use them as Christian churches. His reason was, that the people were accustomed to go to those places for their pagan worship, and habit and custom would tend to bring them to the same places for the new worship. In the same spirit he advised that the old pagan seasons of festival should be retained at their appointed times, and converted into Christian festivals. It is a matter of common knowledge that our Christmas festivities of three generations ago were based in detail upon the old pagan practices. We still rejoice that the sun is coming back.

The disappearance of human sacrifices from the heathen worship, so far as it did occur, did not at all mean the disappearance of sacrificial shedding of blood. Animals and birds were sacrificed, and omens were taken. There were

the traditional sacrificial feasts. In Christian England a chief early difficulty was the determined continuance of feasting on the horse, the remnant of pagan sacrifice.

While the worshippers of nature shed blood to propitiate the more dangerous forces of nature, they made floral offerings in token of their affection for and trust in the gentler powers of nature. For these, too, an altar was naturally required. From whatever point of view we look at the religious worship of the pagan world we have to postulate an altar, a sacrificial stone. Surely those of us who regard our own altar as the holiest stone of our stone rectangle; who offer there the commemoration of the one great Sacrifice once offered; who offer there our choicest floral offerings; we should be the last to question the sacrificial character of the Aberdeenshire Recumbent Stones.

Of the continuity of religious worship at these dedicated spots, through all the developments of paganism and through the greatest development of all, from paganism to Christianity, there cannot really be any valid doubt. The continuity is somewhat obscured by the fact that the gaelic *clachan*, the ordinary name for a church, means "stones," and it is supposed that the kirk was so called because it was the one stone building in the neighbourhood. But local enquiries shew that in many parts the question "are you going to kirk?" is put in the form "are you going to the stones?," and this form we may regard as primaeval, ages before the Christian era. We are told in Ryland's *History of Waterford*, p. 263, that "the Irish expression for going to worship literally signifies going to a stone." In the district with which we are dealing, we have two of our circles called locally "the old kirk o' Keig," "the old kirk o' Tough." The Recumbent Stone and Flankers of one of these circles and parts of the other are shewn on Plates XXII and XXIX.

The pagan religions, based upon observed nature, were so satisfying to the natural man that they were—and are—eradicated with great difficulty and with very imperfect success. The need for careful propitiation of hostile elements was very deeply felt when the people in the woods were exposed to dangers from wild beasts by day as they sought their food and by night as they slept. Civilisation, with the practical disappearance of the dangers which haunted the primaeval man has driven out the idea of propitiating natural powers of evil, and almost equally the idea of winning the favour of natural powers of good. That is, the two main bases of paganism have disappeared, and man has ceased to be naturally religious in the old pagan sense where his religion was the practical safety to which he trusted.

And there were of course positive attractions in their ceremonies which appealed to them very strongly in their state of nature. Such were the intercourse of the sexes at some of their annual feasts, and the great excesses of eating and drinking.

But the worship of the gods of nature was a useful preparation for the worship of God the Creator of nature. We have clear hints in this direction at the most critical period of paganism, when it was first brought face to face with Christianity.

St Paul was at Lystra, in the great plain of Lycaonia, where there was a tradition, prettily used by Ovid<sup>1</sup>, that the great gods Jupiter and Mercury had once come down in the person of men. Lystra itself was under the special protection of Jupiter. The chief temple and its priest were his.

St Paul did there a mighty work. The people were so full of religion, and so earnest in it, that they immediately assumed that the same gods had once again visited the earth. At some cost, the two kinds of sacrifice were prepared, the propitiatory shedding of blood with its feast, and the floral offerings of loving worship.

Paul assured them that this kind of sacrifice and worship were empty of force and value, and the whole idea of such gods as they worshipped was wrong. But he recognised the propriety of their worshipping the Maker of heaven and earth and sea, whose witness was that He did good, gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. That God, it was religious to worship. Not to worship Him, with all that evidence of His works, would be irreligious.

The great case was of course St Paul's experience at Athens, the city of pagan temples.

Seeing there an altar on which there was inscribed the dedication "To an Unknown God," our Authorised Version represents him as telling them they were "too superstitious," as if a moderate amount of superstition was right. The Revised Version reads "rather superstitious," but gives in a marginal note "rather religious." This last comes nearest to the sense. Rather religiously inclined, is the character St Paul read in what he saw at Athens. The Greek word is "gods-fearing," and St Paul, using that word, urged them to be "god-fearing," worshipping one only God.

There is the same phenomenon when we examine the circumstances attendant upon the passing of men's minds from polytheism to monotheism in early Israel.

We have the transition from nature-worship very clearly noted in the book Deuteronomy. The constantly recurring phrase "the LORD our God" is usually read as one phrase. It is very much more than that. The children of Israel had been taught and had accepted the transfer of their worship from the gods of the people around them to the one spiritual LORD, whom they had come to regard as the only true God. "The LORD, *our* God"; "Jehovah, *our* God"; that was their perpetual utterance, that was their creed. *Their* God they

<sup>1</sup> *Metam.* viii. 626.

contrasted with "all the gods of the heathen," which were but idols. It was in that frame of mind that the few early Christian visitors to the crowds of little stone-circle temples, one for each little community, regarded their position among the heathen of early Caledonia. The circles were idolatry, the worship was superstitious, the priests were magicians. And yet, when they found how deeply implanted in the minds of the people was the reverential idea of "going to the stones," it is evident that their mission-method was to invite them to "the stones" to hear the great good news from on high, the Gospel of Christ, which no doubt they introduced as St Paul introduced it at Lystra.

There is one inheritance from druidism which goes very deep in our religious thought and has a prominent place in our religious worship. We refer to the practice of singing the praises of the Lord, *our* God, in bardic hymn, the Psalms of David, the War Songs of the Prince of Peace. We call them the Psalms of David. But neither the practice of bardic hymn nor the actual matter of the bardic hymns of David was the creation of that king. The practice went vastly further back than that; we cannot doubt that David learned much from the hymns of previous generations, going back in some cases to pre-Jehovistic times; retained much of many of them, and re-moulded many others; besides responding to the productive force of creative imagination. Equally no doubt, the practice and the gift and the inspiration flowed down through the centuries that followed David.

It may fairly be argued that religion played a larger part in the pagan mind and life than it plays consciously in the Christian mind and life. The word 'religion' is a difficult word. It appears to have implied in the pagan times mindfulness of the gods, especially in connection with rites and ceremonies. It is regarded as coming from the same root as 'neglect,' and as being the opposite of neglect. When the gods were the powers of nature, the providers of everything man or woman needed, the producers of the flowers and the fruits, the fosterers of the animal pleasures of the body; and when the rites and ceremonies of their worship all made direct appeal to those same passions, and encouraged their full gratification; it was natural and easy and very pleasant to be a good pagan. It is not as easy to be a good Christian. Anyone could be a good pagan, free from the "Thou shalt!" "Thou shalt not!" Comparatively, fewer are equal to being good Christians. It is in that sort of sense that we use the idea of the pagans of the stone circles being as a mass more religious than the Christians of to-day as a mass.

We call the pagans superstitious; their religion, superstition. Superstition is another difficult word. It appears to mean standing over a thing with rapt gaze, with reverential awe. Lost in the wonders of nature, wonders many of which we in our day do not even notice, fearful of sights and scenes of nature's powers which do not stir our bodily or mental pulse in the faintest degree, their

superstition was a desperately earnest reality. We cannot at all subscribe to a definition of superstition to be found in a modern book. "Superstition is the belief in something that is ugly and bad and unmeaning. That is the difference between superstition and religion. Religion is the belief in something that is beautiful and good and significant, something that throws light into the dark places of life, that helps us to see and live." Similarly Lactantius, a Christian writer of A.D. 300, says bluntly that religion is the worship of the true God, superstition of the false gods.

Nor can we subscribe to the correctness of the usage of the words "pagan" and "heathen" as the description of unbelievers. "Pagan" means a villager, a country man, as contrasted with a man of town, of city. "Heathen" means a man who lives out on the moors, in the heath-lands. The ordinary explanation of the use of these words is, that the Christian teachers found these people so much more difficult to convert than the townsmen. That may have been true. If it was, it was of high credit to them. They were more religious than the townsmen, and less inclined to run after "some new thing." The townsmen lived among the works of men. Of the countrymen it might be said, as of the sailors, "these men see the works of the Lord." They were in the highest sense superstitious, they stood in reverential awe in presence of their mysteries. On the other hand, the Londoners of thirteen hundred years ago rather lightly accepted Christianity; gave it a trial for a few years; then resolved that they preferred the idolatrous priests; and then came back again, to be in the fashion. It is rather quaint that "city men" are the Christian antithesis to "pagans," and "the men and the women on the streets" are the Christian antithesis to the "heathen" on the moors.

The condition of affairs among the Celtic populations of some parts of Ireland at the time of writing (Easter 1921) may be to some extent explained on the theory that druidism has not really disappeared there, nor has the belief in the art magic, nor the exercise of the blacker sides of that magic. The magician of to-day is the priest who threatens to turn into a stone<sup>1</sup> the girl who seems to be not going straight. The threatened stone is the lineal descendant of the occupied stones of two and three thousand years ago. The ruthless murders of to-day are the lineal descendants of the crowds of human sacrifices offered to devils in our own island in Cæsar's time. We have felt and have loved the magical charm—the white magic—of the Irish eyes, the Irish smile, the Irish grace of manner. We are now learning what the black magic is.

<sup>1</sup> A more serious threat is to turn her into a hare, with the dread of being hunted by dogs.

### CHAPTER III

Varieties of stone circles.—The Recumbent Stone and Flankers.—The magic circle.—The south-west position.—Facing the north-east.—Sunrise and star-rise.—The magician's announcement of the passage of time by day.—By night.—The Candle Hill stones.—The Calendar.—Lunations.—The daily change of position of sunrise.—The sun and the stars in oriental climes.—Native use of the stars as clocks.—Accuracy of early astronomers.—Method and purposes of marking the point of rise of a special star.—Effect and reason of change of position of star-rise.—Egyptian and Greek star-rise temples.—Was the rise and development of stone worship due to one race of men, or common to many?—St Marnan's Chair.—A throned deity.

It is of course extremely curious and remarkable, and eloquent of mystery, that we should have in this one not extensive district, and so far as is known nowhere else, a collection of circles with Recumbent Stone and Flankers. There are, however, other examples of divergent uses of prominent stones in other areas of no very great size and at no great distance from one another, as we have shewn at page 2. But those examples do not nearly equal in interest or in nearness of locality the divergences of southern Aberdeen, Nairn, and Inverness. The Aberdeen circles have the Recumbent Stone and Flankers; the Nairn circles enclose enormous cairns of great stones; the Inverness circles, such as the present writer has visited, have no enormous cairn and no Recumbent Stone and Flankers, but they have south-west entrances.

Very careful attention has been given in the present century to the remains of stone circles in Aberdeenshire which retain the characteristic feature we have described. It is no wonder that this has been so; for besides the evident interest of these remarkable monuments in themselves, they offer many problems for those who see them and note them. It is probable that even all the care that has been bestowed upon them has not exhausted the problems or solved them all correctly.

There is a sense of completeness and perfectness in a circle which no other plane figure possesses. Of figures not in one plane, the sense of completeness and perfectness attaches itself to the sphere alone, and that because it is carrying the idea of the circle into three dimensions. Plato in the *Timaeus* takes it as certain that the creator of the universe gave to it a figure every extreme point of which was equidistant from a central point. A square and a cube have their charm of symmetry; but they lack the completeness of unbroken lines and of equidistance.

The circle is specially connected with magical rites in all parts of the world. The mediaeval sorcerer sat in the centre of a circle described on the ground by him with his sword or staff. The usual diameter was nine feet.

It isolated him from outward things; and the ban or barrier which it created enabled him to commune with his spirits without their suffering violation by contact with the common herd. A writer in Hastings' *Encyclopædia* credits the Semites with being the origin of the magical circle of mediaeval Europe, with a considerable body of astrological magic. The figure known as "Solomon's Seal" is a circle with six points on its circumference at equal distances, the chords joining which form two equilateral triangles. This was a very potent figure. We cannot look upon the stone circle otherwise than as a symbol of the magic art which was the religion of our far off ancestors. The space occupied by the discussion of the Magic Circle in Hastings' *Encyclopædia* and in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is in itself an eloquent evidence of the far reaching interest of the subjects on which we have stumbled in our consideration of the Aberdeenshire Recumbent Stones and their colleagues.

Among the many problems to which reference has been made, the most important in its possible results is this,—Why is it that in by far the largest number of cases the Recumbent Stone and the Flankers are between the south and the west points of the circle? Although, as has already been said, we regard the special feature of these three stones as unique, the fact of this south-west arrangement is far from being in itself unique. On the contrary, it is not even unusual in stone circles elsewhere to have some special attention called to the south-west part of the circle. The principal recent investigator of the Inverness and Nairn circles remarks that the largest stone and the entrance to the circle are as a rule on the south-west. In Devon and Cornwall there is in many cases a single stone standing outside the circle, some little distance off, to the south-west; as though it were a guide to one of the uses of the circle, so that a man standing there and looking across the centre of the circle would be in a position to note something of importance. He would be practically at the same point of vantage, or, rather, on the same line of vantage, as the magician standing at the middle point of his Recumbent Stone and looking across the centre of the circle.

There is apparently only one answer to the question what is this arrangement for? If the outlying stone is due south-west, and if the normal line from the centre of the Recumbent Stone is due north-east, the magician looking along that line will see the sun rise at Midsummer, whether he stands at the outlying stone or at the middle of the Recumbent Stone. It would be more natural and it would be simpler to speak of the magician standing at the central point of the Recumbent Stone and looking across the centre of the circle. But experience shews that it is in some cases impossible to say with precision what is the central point, even if the circle is a true circle which is far from being always the case. On the other hand we may probably assume that a flat stone marked a central point across which the magician's gaze must pass.

If the outlier in the one case and the middle of the Recumbent Stone in the other is further to the west than due south-west, the magician looking across the centre of the circle will look east of north-east. He will see the sun rise earlier or later than Midsummer, it may be in May, it may be in July.

On the other hand, if the outlier and the centre of the Recumbent Stone are a little further to the south than due south-west, the magician will look a little north of north-east. The sun does not rise north of north-east. If the magician is on the look-out for something in the heavens to rise above the horizon, it can only be a star that he is looking for.

As the rising of the sun each day starts the day, and the rising of a suitable star is taken to start the night, we seem to get hold of an idea that the circles where the magician watches for the rising of a star were used somehow for night purposes, and the other circles for day purposes.

We can in imagination carry these points further.

For instance, a skilled druid priest, call him by any of the bad names which records attach to him, magician, astronomer, astrologer, mathematician, would not be much of a druid if he did not know by experience that if he stood at the centre of his circle and watched the sun rise on any day, and noted which of his stones most nearly marked the place, he could say safely what part of the year he was at. He would know that if the sun rose halfway between a given two of his stones, it was time for oats or barley to be sown. He would know that as the sun each successive day got nearer and nearer to rising directly behind a particular one of his stones, the day of a great village feast was coming very near. He would know by the changing angles of the shadows of his stones as the day went on, exactly how much of the day was gone. If he didn't, he was not worth his place. In other words, he had in his hands an annual calendar and a day clock. Naturally, he would convey this knowledge to his people, and the less he said about how he knew it, the greater the respect the mystery would create and foster.

In this way we can realise the ordinary daily and nightly course of events in connection with these circles, quite apart from the special occasions when the pagan peoples had their special feasts and ceremonies. For the present we will regard them as astronomical observatories, not as churches.

The custodian of the art of magic fulfilled a very useful practical function in the daily and nightly life of the community. Take first the day. He noted the sunrise. By some ordinary megaphonic method he announced it to the community, though of course they could as a rule see it for themselves. The circles that still remain are in several cases near one another. In the *Old Statistical Account of Scotland* we read time after time that in 1794 there were three "temples" or remains of "temples" in a parish, and centuries before that there must have been many more. Thus no very great noise



might be necessary. If blowing a horn was not adequate, some such instrument as a "bull-roarer," a flat piece of wood whirled round by a string, or a gong, a flat resonant board beaten by a drum-stick, would convey to the community the note of the hour.

Whatever the alignment of the recumbent stone might be, whether the circle was a sunrise circle or a star-rise circle, the magician would be able, as we have suggested, by his complete knowledge of the directions of the shadows of the several stones on the east side of his circle, to make announcements say in the middle time between sunrise and mid-day. He could announce noon. Turning towards the west, he could by the shadows of the western stones announce mid-afternoon. He could announce sunset. We may be quite sure that if there was a fog he had rules which would enable him to make his announcements without seeing the sun, not with the accuracy of a bright day, but with sufficient accuracy to maintain his reputation as a magician. He could make his announcements hourly, an hour probably meaning the twelfth part of the daylight, however long or short the daylight might be.

The same process could go on during the flight of the night. His announcements would not be based on any question of shadows, for the question of the shadows cast by the moon is so vastly more complicated than the corresponding question in the case of the sun that we may well doubt whether even the arch-magician himself could have systematised it. The magician would have his clock star. He would announce its arrival, and also, by practised ocular observation with the clear sight of the man whose eyes had not been spoiled by civilisation, the main periods of its journey, as in the day time for the sun, or at longer intervals if his flock desired less broken slumbers. If the stars were clouded and could not be read, it is conceivable, but to our narrowed natural intelligence it seems very improbable, that the magician might have something to guide him. It seems safer to suppose that if there was a fog the village clock did not strike at night, much as we experienced with our clocks in London at the time when air raids were possible. We have already pointed out that Tacitus, who visited Britain with his father-in-law Agricola, tells us (*Agricola*, 12) that while the days were disgusting in Britain because of rain and clouds, the nights were clear.

It may well have been—for we are bound to credit the circle-builders and the circle-workers with remarkable ingenuity and skill—that the magician had his way of making his announcements of the passage of time by night without making any noise or waking any one of his community. Fire is a natural idea, the burning of a few tufts of grass, say in the middle of the night, the night, like the day, having different lengths according as the day was short or long. Here it is possible that we have an actual evidence of the probability of this guess in a local name. Three of the circles in our district are on ground called

by tradition a Candle Hill. We have the Candle Hill of Insch, the Candle Hill of Oyne, and the Candle Hill of Rayne. I am told that a burning handful of dry grass would now be called in gaelic a *coinneal*, and that the gaelic *coinneal* is pronounced *cannel*. These heights should be called Cannel Hills.

Besides announcing the passage of time, the magician of course would announce in some special manner the times at which his sacrifices were held, just as our village clocks strike the hour, and the bells toll or ring for Divine Service.

It is natural to suppose that in the earliest times of observation of the movements in the heavens, in the infancy of man, the moon would be the basis of the calculations of the flight of time. The daily appearance and disappearance of the sun formed the basis of the calculation of the flight of time during each day; but to keep count of the number of sunsettings very soon became practically impossible. The moon, on the other hand, used up quite a large number of sunsettings in completing its course, and it was much less difficult to keep count of the moon's changes from new to new, from full to full, than of the sun's daily disappearances and re-appearances. Counting up the new moons in a man's life or in a chieftain's dominance was within the bounds of possibility. Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven "years" and begat Lamech; and after that he lived seven hundred eighty and two "years"; in all nine hundred sixty and nine "years." If we read "moons" for "years," Methuselah was between fourteen and fifteen of our years old when his first child was born, a usual age in those climes, and he was seventy-four and a half of our years old when he died, evidently an unusual age in those early times. Long after those early times, four score years were labour and sorrow.

But even so, that was very cumbrous record-keeping. Further observation of the motions of the heavenly bodies brought into special prominence the fact that the sun changed continuously and regularly the precise point of his daily re-appearance. The point of daily re-appearance travelled steadily day by day along the horizon till it suddenly ceased its advance, paused, and began to travel back again, after a time ceasing to retire and advancing again to exactly the same extreme point as before, so far as they could determine. The time between its two re-appearances at that extreme point meant a large number of daily appearances of the sun and a considerable number of complete courses of the moon, and it appears to have become usual to take that large period as the basis of calculation of the flight of time. A period closely resembling our present year had thus become fixed and known. That was the June—December year. On what day the year was counted to begin is quite another question. Our New Year's Day is several days after the winter solstice; our Midsummer Day is at the summer solstice<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See further on page 39.

We have spoken, so far, of observations of the sun, that is, of daylight hours. With us, the night hours are roughly speaking about as many in the course of a year as the day hours. Towards the end of June, the sun is up about four and a half hours more than twelve; towards the end of December, about four and a quarter hours less than twelve. In our latitudes the warmth and light of the sun naturally render the daylight hours more important and more available for work and business than the night hours. As a rule, we cannot have too much of the sun. We are about and alert all day.

In tropical lands, they have too much of the sun; too much of his blaze, too much of his heat. They have to protect themselves against his too much power. The shadow of a great rock is the sun-weary world's continual desire. Their eyes cannot watch the course of the sun. They sleep through the hottest hours. When Isaiah was telling of the crowning mercies of the Lord, and rose to the very height of inspired imagination, he cried, "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them."

With us the night is a time of cessation of business. We sleep as much as we can. We too often toss about, longing for daylight. We see very little of the stars as a rule, because we are shut up in a room. We are delighted with their beauty when we happen to see them at their best, and we probably determine to enjoy and to observe that beauty much more frequently and fully than has been our wont. But as a rule that does not last long.

To the orientals, starlight is the cream of the twenty-four hours. Much of their business is done when the sun is down. They know intimately, by constant natural observation, the majestic motion of the stars. They can watch them closely in their revolving course. They can read the flight of time by them as by a night clock. Colonel Tilney taught our soldiers to find their way at night by the motions of marked stars<sup>1</sup>. He tells us that Australian bushmen, Basutos, Arabs, wherever you go, steer their course by the stars, and that men out at night for big game whisper to the shikari how goes the time?, knowing that they need not look at their watch. And in our own lands, we may feel quite sure that keen observers of nature, as our far-off predecessors in common with all other early human beings certainly were, could not but have marked by the stars, almost certainly by some one specially conspicuous star, how the time of darkness was passing on. The sun by day, the stars or the special star by night, told of the passing of time.

The earliest recorded example of the measurement of time by noting the altitudes of any heavenly body is an Arab record of A.D. 829, which states that when a certain solar eclipse began, the sun's altitude was 7°; when the eclipse ended it was 24°; as observed at Bagdad by Ahmed ibn Abdallah, called Habash. This method became usual among the Arabians, who measured the

<sup>1</sup> *Marching or flying by night without compass*, London, Hugh Rees.

time of lunar eclipses by measuring the altitude of some bright star at the beginning and the end of the eclipse.

But those dates are modern, as compared with the astonishing observation and precision of a Greek astronomer who flourished about 150 B.C. This was Hipparchus, who probably observed at Alexandria. He marked among the revolving stars forty-four prominent stars, at such positions in the heavens that one or more would be straight over-head, in his country, at the beginning of each sidereal hour of the night. Modern science has calculated back from the present places and motions of the stars to what would be their places in 140 B.C. They only differ by one minute of time from the position assigned to them by Hipparchus 2060 years ago.

Of course Hipparchus had his predecessors. Precision such as that does not come in a year or two. How far back we may carry it in Greece we cannot say.

It may be asked, what has this to do with Pictish stone circles? Well, deep down in Mycenæ, Schliemann found sculptured on stones the very stag-hunts which the Picts sculptured on so many of the stones in Caledonia; and he found gold buttons with six-leg devices which no one could distinguish from the Pictish circular discs with six-leg devices at Aberlemno and elsewhere. If such links as this with Greece exist on Caledonian sculptured stones, it is surely reasonable to suppose that Greek observations of the heavens were not unknown to those early Caledonians, who with some very set purpose arranged the circles of rude stones which as we shall see speak to us so definitely of astronomical connections.

In times of religious worship connected with stars, the followers of the cult of each of the gods associated their deity with some particular star, and it was only natural that their priests should watch and wait with minute care for the moment at which the bright symbol of their god or goddess should appear above the horizon. It followed that they must have permanent and accurate marks which should fix their eyes upon the exact spot of the eagerly awaited emergence of brilliancy. We have the methods on record.

The following passage is quoted from a hieroglyphical relation of the rebuilding of a temple in the time of Seti I, about 1445 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

"The living god, the magnificent son of Asti [a name of Thoth], nourished by the sublime goddess in the temple of the sovereign of the country, stretches the rope with joy. With his glance at *Ak* (? the middle) of the Bull's Thigh constellation, he establishes the temple-house of the mistress of Denderah, as took place before." And again, "Looking to the sky at the course of the rising stars, recognising the *Ak* of the Bull's Thigh constellation, I establish the corners of the temple of her majesty."

<sup>1</sup> See more in *Nature*, June 18, 1892.

In another Egyptian record we find the king and the priest going out with two stakes fastened to the two ends of a rope of some length. One of the stakes is driven in to the ground, and the king waits till the moment when the desired star is rising. The other stake is then driven in at a point which fixes the stretched rope in the exact line pointing to the star. The rope is then used to define the line on the surface of the ground which is to be the axis of the temple to be built, so that the priests at the innermost recess can see the star rise by looking along the axis.

We gather that in Egyptian latitudes there were two special purposes in marking the exact spot on the horizon at which a certain star would rise. The late Mr F. C. Penrose, the architect in charge of St Paul's Cathedral Church towards the close of last century, who had studied the whole subject carefully, and had examined the alignments of temples not in Egypt only but also—and especially—in Greece, described the salient points in the question. We may summarise briefly his description, though some parts of our summary are in fact repetition of what has already been said.

The astronomer-priests in those countries used certain very bright stars as "warning stars," to warn them that after some space of time well known to them the sun would begin to appear on the horizon. The star must be the bright star nearest to the sun; just not so near as to be rendered invisible by the glow which precedes the first appearance of the disc of the sun. When the bright star rose on the horizon, the priests knew exactly how long they had got to make ready for the ceremonies of the sunrise. The star served the function which the church clock serves when it strikes three-quarters and the service is at the hour. Beyond the passing interest of knowing the use of warning stars, we may for our present purpose leave them without further mention.

The case is very different with the other purpose of observing the rise of a certain star. This is, to provide a clock for the night, as the sun provides a clock for the day. The priest noted the rise of the star, and announced it to the neighbourhood by lighting a little fire or sounding some one of the several kinds of megaphone in use in various countries, the horn, or the flat sounding board struck with a stick, or the bull-roarer. The people knew the star, and at any time of the night they knew what portion of the night still remained by seeing how far it had got on its way from the horizon of rising to the horizon of setting. The star was a "clock-star."

For this purpose it was advisable to have some bright star whose journey from rise to setting was long, so that it rose very early in the evening and set very late in the morning; that is, it must be as near to the pole as might be, but not so near that it never went below the horizon. In our latitudes there are very few stars indeed which have fulfilled those restricted conditions. The most notable, indeed the only really notable for us, are Arcturus and Capella.

Such were the purposes of the ancients in their careful watch for the rise of some bright particular star. For us the records we have of their watch have a striking interest. If we know from the axis of an old temple or by any other indication precisely where a bright star rose on the horizon when the temple was built, and observe the point on the horizon at which the same star now rises, we can calculate the number of years which have passed between the two observations. The pole of the ecliptic maintains a nearly fixed position among the stars: but the pole of the Earth's diurnal rotation, at present near the Pole Star, moves round the pole of the ecliptic in a period of about twenty-six thousand years. The recurrence of the equinox is thus accelerated by about the seventieth of a degree annually. From this and other causes there is from year to year a slight change in the spot at which a star rises. The amount of this change for each star is known; and if the distance of the spot at one period from the spot at another period is ascertained, the number of years that have passed in the interval is known. Hence the clock-star not only told the passage of the hours of the night to our far-off predecessors; it tells us, their far-off successors, how long ago they made their record.

By the side of ancient temples apparently aligned to a particular star, there are in several cases seen the foundations of a previous temple whose axis is inclined at an acute angle to the axis of the temple still standing. That shews that when the rising of the special star could no longer be seen by the priests standing at the innermost point and looking along the narrow tunnel-like passage opening upon the horizon, a new temple was built, aligned to the point where the star at the time rose. No doubt experience had taught them to build it so that hundreds of years must pass before the rising-point of the star again passed out of sight. In one case, no doubt at a period of anti-waste feeling, they knocked down the jamb of the opening on one side of the entrance, and thus enabled the priests to get along without a new temple for a few decades of years more.

We shall see that Sir Norman Lockyer suggested corresponding changes in the alignment of some of the Aberdeenshire Recumbent Stones.

It may be well to mention in passing another problem which it would be interesting to discuss, though its discussion would lead us off our simple points.

It is this:—Did the stone-circle worship, or, to speak more broadly the stone-worship, develop naturally in the mind of early man as a whole, or of some one far-spread race of early man, or was it developed in some race-centre or tribe-centre, and carried say to our shores by migration of the race that developed it, or a race that had learned it?

Whichever or whatever view may be taken of these and such-like points, it seems clear that we must postulate for Caledonia many centuries of development and spread before Rome set foot on this land of ours. Imagination runs

riot when one tries to realise the conditions and the date when first it was said in Devon or twixt Don and Dee, "Let us have a stone circle!"

Again, the stone circle did not spring complete and fully thought out from some one's brain. You must postulate ages of development from the first handling of stones with religious intent to the stone circle constructed with physical power and skill and astronomical thought and observation far beyond that possessed by the average country priest and the average country people of the Dartmoor or the Caledonia of to-day. Dean Inge might well have pointed to the contrast in these respects between the sinews and thought of the average Briton of to-day and the sinews and thought of the corresponding people of 1920 B.C.; while in religiousness, there is not progress of which we can be proud but there is relapse of which we should be ashamed.

We have had much to say on pagan worship, its earnestness, its ceremonial, its temples. In dealing with races whom we regard as savage, whether contemporary races or races prehistoric, it is uncertain how far we can credit them with imagination, especially in their thoughts of the unseen powers who played so large a part in their lives. To a Christian of to-day who had to do with the mosaic setting of the great White Christ in the eastern apse of St Paul's, the Recumbent Stone and its Flankers in many cases call to the mind the idea of a great deity of the pagan worship, seated invisible on the Recumbent Stone in awful majesty, as on a vast armed throne. The whole energy of the tribe had been devoted to procuring at great labour—the greater the labour the more its acceptability to the deity—the noblest stone within their reach for the seat of the god, invisible but real, whose wrath they appeased or whose good-will they evoked by the shedding of human blood. The "props" might in this conception be stools for the feet of the deity.

This idea appears to have been translated into Christian language in a churchyard on the boundary of Aberdeenshire towards Banffshire. The Church of St Marnoch—the affectionate diminutive of Marnan—is guarded and surrounded by the beautiful stream of the Deveron<sup>1</sup>; so the old legend tells of the church where St Marnan was buried, and where his head was shewn and washed every Sunday in the year. The church lies within the area of an ancient stone circle, of which two stones are still *in situ*, on opposite sides of the church. One of these, a fine pillar towards the south-west, is called St Marnan's Chair, certainly not a name of recent or of late mediaeval creation. Anything less like a chair it would be difficult to imagine. But give it a companion some twelve feet or more away, and a great Recumbent Stone like the one at Cothie Muir lying between the two, and you have the majestic representation of an armed throne worthy of some great Power in the pagan hierarchy, worthy even of being re-named St Marnan's Chair by the Christian.

<sup>1</sup> Pulcherrimo Duverne fluvio munita et vallata.

## CHAPTER IV

Stellar and solar circles.—Azimuth and Declination.—List of stellar circles with supposed dates.—The transport of heavy stones.—The sacred circle.—Places of assembly.—Places of incineration.—Astronomical observatories.—Denderah 3100 B.C.—Britain 2300 B.C.—Early clocks, the clepsydra.—The sun dial.—Solstitial circles.—May Year circles.—Abnormal alignments.—Beltane.—The farmer's year.—New Year's Day.—Beltane celebrations.—Eggs and egg similes.—Mystery of the circles.—Are the stones other than the Recumbent Stone and Flankers set in a fixed order?—Test applied at three of the circles.

OF 20 Aberdeenshire circles examined by Sir Norman Lockyer, he classes 15 as clock-star circles, 2 as May Year circles, and 3 as solstitial. That is, 15 were built for observing the rising of stars, and 5 for observing the rising of the sun. Five others he describes as abnormal; that is, they do not fall into either of the two astronomical classes, stellar and solar. Of others it is known that the stones have been moved, so that no argument can be based upon them.

With regard to the 15 in the stellar class, it is clear that if the recumbent stones remain as they were originally placed, and if they were originally placed to note the rise of a particular star, so that we know how far off the original place of rising of the star is from the place where that same star now rises, we can fix the date of their original laying down in position, for we know the rate at which the place of rising changes in consequence of the precession of the equinoxes. It must be confessed that it is a high call on our imagination to ask us to believe that great stones weighing many tons, mostly lying on the surface not embedded in the soil, have remained so fixed in their places that they have not changed their bearing in four thousand years. And yet we are only called upon to believe that the central portion of the stone has not shifted longitudinally; and that is not nearly the same thing as believing a general statement that the stone has not shifted its position in any respect. It may have sunk into the ground, though it is curious to note how little that appears to have been the case. It may have leaned forward, or leaned backward. None of those three obvious kinds of change need affect the position of the central part of the stone. Further, if all of the stones which now appear to have marked a star-rise were originally set to mark the place of sunrise on some important festival day, and have since shifted, it is very remarkable that they should in such a large number of cases have so shifted that they now point so far towards the north that the sun never rises where they point. If shifting of the stones had really taken place, we should have had them pointing indiscriminately to places where the sun does rise and to places where the sun does not rise.



However that may be, Sir Norman Lockyer proceeded on the supposition that the normal line from the centre of the stone to the centre of the circle remains as it was when first the stone was placed in position. On that supposition he calculates the dates of such placing in position from the present places of rising of the two possible or probable stars of observation, Arcturus and Capella, and we may take his most interesting list with gratitude. We have special permission to use this list, our application for such permission being presumably the last communication on any scientific subject addressed to him before his death. It should be remembered that the alignment is in each case clearly to the north of north-east, and therefore, if the stone has stood fairly firm, stellar and not solar.

The names given to the circles by Sir Norman are not in all cases easy to locate, the local names varying in some cases.

It may be explained that the *azimuth* is the angle between a line drawn from the place of observation to the true North and the line drawn towards the point of rising of the star named. Azimuth N.  $23^{\circ} 35'$  E. means that the angle in this case is  $23^{\circ} 35'$  from due North, and the E. shews that the place of rising is in the North-East. The *declination* is the distance of a star, in degrees, from the celestial equator. Like so many of our technical terms in science, *azimuth* is a word taken from the Arabs, our masters and instructors in science.

	True azimuth at right angles across the circle	Elevation of horizon	Declina- tion N.	Dates B.C.	
				If Arcturus	If Capella
Braehead Leslie ...	N. $23^{\circ} 35'$ E.	$1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$	$30^{\circ} 58'$	250	2000
Ley Lodge ...	14 15	0	31 18	330	1940
Louden Wood ...	11 55	0	31 38	370	1890
Tomnagorn ...	15 15	$\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ ?	31 42	390	1860
Wanton Wells ...	21 45	2	31 52	420	1830
Old Keig ...	29 15	4	31 55	430	1820
South Fornet ...	8 3	0	32 4	450	1800
Nether Boddam ...	21 15	2	32 8	460	1790
Aikey Brae ...	4 15	0	32 18	500	1760
Castle Fraser ...	20 51	$2\frac{1}{2}$	32 42	570	1680
Newcraig ...	20 49	$2\frac{1}{2}$	32 43	570	1680
Loanhead Daviot ...	8 0	1	33 14	660	1580
Bourtie ...	14 45	$2\frac{1}{2}$	33 57	770	1460
Cothie Muir ...	18 55	4	33 42	920	1300

While we give this list exactly as Sir Norman gives it, we must confess to feeling grave doubts as to the rigid series of dates given by accurate calculations. They appear to postulate too long a continuance of one special practice, which seems not to have come from any known district and not to have spread to any known district. See further remarks in the Preface.

Whichever of the two stars was the clock-star, these fourteen Recumbent Stones were set in position at intervals extending in all to 700 years. To take two in the same parish, Old Keig was set in position 490 years after its neighbour, the Cothie Muir circle, or it was set 500 years before it. It is only fair to say that the Cothie Muir Recumbent Stone and Flankers are very different from those at Old Keig. To judge by appearances, Old Keig has suffered more from the centuries than Cothie Muir has; and if either star tells its age, it is Capella. Loanhead Daviot and Bourtie are exceedingly unlike one another; Sir Norman makes them 110 years apart. Bourtie is much the ruder of the two, which points to Arcturus as the star.

In four cases, Dyce, Whitehill Wood, Raes of Clune, and Candle Hill Insch, Sir Norman finds the alignment due north. He does not know of any very obvious counterparts in Britain. He thinks they may possibly be held to indicate an advance in the manner of determining time at night, in which case their erection has been at a more recent date.

To imagine that in an age when cranes and screw-jacks appear to have been unknown, and there was no motive power other than human muscles and cattle-hauling, the massive Recumbent Stones of our Aberdeenshire circles were not put in position for any very special purpose or use is practically impossible. The great lintel of the Lion Gate at Mycenæ is calculated to weigh 10 tons, a weight small in comparison with many of the Recumbent Stones, one of which is estimated at 25 tons. As we have mentioned Mycenæ, it may be well to say that the enormous inner lintel of the Treasury of Atreus there is put as high as 120 tons. Mycenæ was being remodelled when some of the Aberdeenshire circles, according to Sir Norman Lockyer, were being set in position, and was burned before many of them, according to him, had been erected, about 1200 B.C.

A sacrificial purpose and use does not seem to need a south-west position, apart from questions of sun worship. Astronomical purposes and uses do not specially demand that enormous pains and labour shall be bestowed upon the erection of a massively expressive combination of stones at one particular spot, and that the south-west. For purposes of public meetings no such arrangement is necessary, or specially useful.

Mr A. H. Allcroft, in his paper on *The Celtic Circle-Moot* in the Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, Session 1918-19, pages 1 to 29, calls attention to a passage in the Iliad of Homer, xviii. 503, 504. The passage occurs in the well-known description of the shield of Achilles. The scene represented is a trial of a special nature, which was beyond the sole jurisdiction of the head of the state, and required the intervention of the Council, the Elders. They are described as sitting on polished stones in a sacred circle.

οἱ δὲ γέροντες  
εἶατ' ἐπὶ ξεστοῖσι λίθοις ἱερῶ ἐνὶ κύκλῳ.

It may have been the case that stone circles were used as places for folk-moots, as Mr Allcroft argues, but in this case the public were outside, kept back by heralds. And if the Recumbent Stone was the seat of the presiding officer, it would in most cases have been so uncomfortable a seat that the meeting would not last long. Certainly the rude stones in our sacred circles were impossible for use of the same character as in the case of the polished stones of the Iliad.

For burial places, or places of incineration, we should not expect the arrangement in question as the one and only natural feature. We cannot understand the probability—it is almost safe to say the possibility—of this locally universal practice without some known and acknowledged practical reason. It may be added that a magician who knew his business could work out his sunrise and star-rise, and calendar and clock arrangements, with any circle of stones with a known centre, after a year's experience of them. He would know to which stone, or between which stones, he must look for his various daily and nightly marks on the horizon. But in that case each new magician would have to learn his circle, and meanwhile all the gods of nature might be in ferment.

On the whole, we cannot escape from the conviction that there is one fixed set purpose of primary importance in this south-west position; and we cannot suggest any purpose of primary importance that can compare with the astronomical, astrological, purpose of specially noting something in the north-east.

We therefore seem bound to consider the arrangements of the several circles with our minds distinctly leaning towards Sir Norman Lockyer's carefully worked out contention. Many, probably, will accept that view without accepting the further view that the Recumbent Stone is of the nature of a sacrificial stone. We have noted that the idea of sacrifice does not demand a south-west position for an altar, but enough has been said to indicate the opinion that the stone which for astronomical purposes is set in the south-west is in fact the sacrificial altar which on religious grounds we may be sure was somewhere in the circle. While, then, we hold that these huge stones are altars, not slaughter stones, we prefer to call them Recumbent Stones.

Sir Norman's observations of British circles and avenues in the south-west, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, had led him to believe that the practice so long employed in Egypt, of determining the time at night by the revolution of a star round the pole, was almost universally followed in the British circles of the south-west. The practice was, to watch a first-magnitude star which only just dips below the northern horizon and thus is visible for almost the whole of its nightly revolution round the pole. Doubtless, he says, this method was employed in Babylonia, but there all the temples—or in other words the

astronomical observatories—are said to have disappeared, and it is only the Egyptian practice that is left for us to study.

The earliest example is at Denderah. The star observed there was  $\alpha$  Ursae Majoris, which only dipped  $5^\circ$  below the northern horizon about 4950 B.C. as is shewn by inscriptions. In course of time this star ceased to dip below the horizon, and another marked star had to be found that fulfilled the conditions. The gradual changes which had brought  $\alpha$  of the Great Bear out of the list of stars that dipped had brought  $\gamma$  Draconis into that list for the latitude of Denderah. This star could be observed about 3100 B.C. from the axis of the old temple which had pointed to  $\alpha$  of the Great Bear, and Pepi restored the temple when he found that it pointed to the new star. These two dates entirely agree with the most recent views of Egyptian chronology. The same was done, and for the same star, by the rebuilding of the temple at Annu by Usersten 2433 B.C.

Sir Norman believed, as the result of his enquiries, that clock-star observations came into our British islands about 2300 B.C., when Arcturus just did not rise and set in the sea horizon, being too near the pole. In order that it might appear to rise and set, and so might serve as a clock-star, sites were chosen for the stone circles where the north-east horizon was high; in some cases hills made the horizon as much as  $3^\circ$  and  $4^\circ$  above the sea horizon. The star Capella appears to have been the clock-star in a few cases, although it was below the horizon for a comparatively long time and so did not serve as a star for the observation of the passage of time during the night for so large a part of the night as was desirable.

Sir Norman had based his theory on the fact, as observed by him, that there was usually a standing stone outside a British circle, a little way off, usually towards the west of south. Drawing an imaginary line from that stone through the centre of the circle to the horizon, you would come to a point on the horizon a little to the east of north. This could not have been to mark the spot where the sun rose at some particular time, for the point of sunrise never gets northwards beyond due north-east. If, then, the intention was to mark the rise of a celestial body, that body must have been some particular bright star, and the purpose of the arrangement would naturally have been to note the moment of its rise, and to count from that time, by noting the passage of the star on its course to its setting in the west, the passing of the hours of darkness. As the sun served as a day clock, the star served as a night clock.

It may be remarked in passing that we cannot credit our predecessors in early Britain with having the clock of the period. That clock was the water clock, known by its Greek name as the clepsydra, or water-stealer; a glass instrument used to check the length of speeches. There were small holes in the bottom, by which the water was "stolen," like the sand running out in an

hour glass. Hence to waste time when making a speech was called *aquam perdere*, to allow more time *aquam dare*. It is said to have been used for clock purposes by the Egyptians. Plato is said to have invented compensations which made it more accurate. In the hydraulic clock of Ctesibius of Alexandria, about 200 B.C., the movement of water-wheels brought a little figure gradually up to point out the hour with a little stick on an index.

Reference has been made to the natural probability that the magician made full note of the directions of the shadows cast by the several stones during the day at various times of the year. Any of us who have had to depend upon something other than a compass for guiding our way among unknown mountains will understand such use of the stones. With us, the time on our watch has enabled us to read the lesson of the shadow; with the magician, the shadow of his stone enabled him to tell the time.

Of course the sun-dial comes into our mind in this connection. We might take it that the stone circle is the parent of the sun-dial<sup>1</sup>. It has been supposed that there is mention of a sun-dial in a letter from the Ostrogoth king Theodoric to the Roman philosopher Boethius about A.D. 520, asking him to send "an instrument marked by the illumination of the sun" to the Burgundian king who had asked Theodoric for such a thing. By a curious and probably unintentional coincidence, the phrases used by Theodoric remind us of the magic art of earlier times. He appeals to Boethius as astronomer, arithmetician, geometer, mechanician; and he tells him<sup>2</sup> that "it will be a great gain that the Burgundians shall daily look upon something sent by us which will appear to them little short of miraculous."

In regard to circles arranged for watching sunrise, Sir Norman divides them into those which are solstitial, that is, are aligned to the midsummer sunrise, and those which are aligned to suit the May year, that is, to point well east of north-east. Of the solstitial circles nothing need be said in detail. They are the three circles of Midmar, Sin Hinny, and Stonehead, which have been left intact<sup>3</sup>. The so called "May Year" circles ask for special remark.

Sir Norman finds solar alignments for the May year in the Recumbent Stones at Berry Brae and Hatton of Ardoyne; the remains of a May year

<sup>1</sup> The "dial" of Ahaz, 2 Kings xx. 9, is an error. Anaximander of Miletus is credited with the invention of the gnomon or index of the sun-dial, about 580 B.C. Herodotus, writing about 450 B.C., says the Greeks learned it and the division of the day into twelve hours from the Babylonians. The early dials were not at all like ours. The Chaldean Berosus invented about 250 B.C. the hemispherical dial which was in use for centuries. Dials were not "equal-hour" before the 13th century.

<sup>2</sup> See my *King Alfred's Books*, pages 265, 266.

<sup>3</sup> But see remarks on Midmar and Castle Fraser at page 44.

avenue at Ardlair, and another marked on the map near Kirkton of Clatt<sup>1</sup>. It is, however, a serious fact that in those cases the Recumbent Stone, or the Flankers, or both, have been disturbed. This, he remarks, "suggests a practice acted on by the Egyptian priests in regard to the worship of any other sun- or star-god than the one to which they were specially attached." The bearing of that does not seem very clear, but he draws the conclusion that the fact of the disturbance is an argument in favour of the erection of the May-year circles before the solstitial circles of Midmar, Sin Hinny, and Stonehead.

At Ardlair, mentioned above, the Recumbent Stone is in the S.E. quadrant. That is completely abnormal. But, Sir Norman says, "there are indications that this was not the original position. It is unlike any other recumbent stone I have seen: I believe its many sharp angles and cracks are due to the action of fire, and the angles and cracks are all the more striking since both supporters are rounded and crackless."

As we have mentioned this abnormal position of a Recumbent Stone, we had better digress into a mention of another abnormal case, that of Old Bourtree Bush, where the Recumbent Stone is due east of the centre of the circle, "to define the place of the equinoctial sunsets," Sir Norman says. He adds that these are the only cases where the Stone is not in the south-west quadrant. Mr Ritchie, who has visited and photographed all in our district, informed him that he only knew of one exception, and in that case he knew that the farmer, having moved the stone, replaced it wrongly when he was compelled to restore it.

It seems quite natural in the abstract to suppose that a May alignment was earlier than a solstitial alignment, except for the fact that in the one case the place of the sunrise goes on northwards whereas in the other case it remains stationary for a time and then recedes. But the exception may be slightly discounted by the fact that to the careful observer of those early days the place of the solstitial sunrise could be detected by the absence of change the next day.

We shall have to speak<sup>2</sup> of the importance of the May sunrise at the beginning of the month as ushering in the Beltane celebrations. But from the agricultural point of view there is another important consideration. Our four periods of the year, beginning with January, April, July, October, do not fall in with the processes of agriculture and nature as well as the periods of what is called the May year, May, August, November, February. Hence a May-year circle would serve as the farmer's calendar.

It is important to keep quite clear the two ideas of a stone circle being set to mark the beginning of a calendar year and being set to mark the time

<sup>1</sup> Sir Norman gives the true azimuths of the May sunrise as follows: at the sea horizon, N. 57° 50' E.: with a hill horizon one degree higher, N. 60° E.: two degrees higher, N. 61° 30' E.

<sup>2</sup> Page 40.

when the spring work of the farmer must be in full swing. The year of nature is fixed; the year of the calendar, the beginning of which marks the beginning of yet another year to be counted among the years of history, can be said to begin at any date the people choose to fix. We are told that the ancient Egyptians, the Phoenicians, and the Persians, began their year at the autumnal equinox, September 21. The Greeks until 432 B.C., began the year at the winter solstice, December 21; at the date mentioned the Greeks made the summer solstice, June 21, their New Year's Day. The ancient Romans began the year at the winter solstice, December 21, until the Julian Calendar transferred it to the first day of January.

The usual day in mediaeval Christianity was March 25; but in Anglo-Saxon England it was December 25. William the Conqueror's coronation is said to have fixed it at January 1.

Sir Norman Lockyer holds that counting the year as beginning in or with May was an earlier practice than counting it as beginning with the solstice, June 21. As a matter of astronomical observation, there are great advantages in the solstitial year, for the sun rises at the same point of the horizon for three successive days, which is of course not the case with the first or any other day of May. He would therefore regard a circle with a solstitial alignment of its axis as later in time than a circle in the same neighbourhood with what we may call a Beltane alignment. At the same time he points out that the earlier method had an advantage of its own which the other lacked; it fixed two intermediate days in the year, the one the day on which the sunrise reached that point when its progress was northward, the other the day on which it reached that point on its recession southwards. He is of opinion, as we have seen, that he has found in Aberdeenshire evidence of an intentional alteration of the alignment, to convert a circle from a May-year circle to a solstitial circle.

The farmer's year began with the full flush of vegetation which opened at the beginning of May. This was in pagan times naturally ushered in by worship specially concerned with flowers. These May Day celebrations go very far back in time. We still deck our cart-horses and dray-horses with gay ribbons on May Day; and up to a few years ago, drivers still continued to have flowers on their whip handles on that day. Our name of the month May is taken from the Romans, who offered sacrifice on the first day of the month to Maia, the mother of Mercury, and went in procession to the grotto of Egeria. From the 28th of April to the 2nd of May they kept the festival of Flora, the goddess of flowers. To marry in the spring time would naturally be taken as propitious to the fruitfulness of the union; but the festival of the wandering ghosts of the unhappy dead, the Lemuria, was observed on the 9th, 11th and 13th of May, whence presumably we have Ovid's warning "'tis ill to

wed in month of May." Few of the pagan "superstitions" are more alive in the present day than this.

A very learned Frenchman, M. Ruelle, has published lists of the divisions of the year according to the farmer's year, divisions corresponding to the principal processes of agriculture, in ancient Greece and ancient Rome. The two countries agreed in the main, differing only by a day or two. The commencement of summer, autumn, winter, and spring, was marked by the Greeks by May 6, August 11, November 10, and February 7; by the Latins by May 9, August 8, November 9, and February 7.

There would appear to be some rivalry in importance in those early times between May Day with its special ceremonies and May 6 or May 9 as the beginning of summer and of the year. We have a very curious hint which appears to have reference to this rivalry. Jamieson in his four-volume Scottish Dictionary has a large collection of records and traditions under the general heading of "Beltane." He gives the following early Scottish proverb:—"You have skill of man and beast, you was born between the Beltans," that is, he adds, the first and eighth of May. The Gaelic name for Beltane is *bealltainn*. It is now known not to have any connection with Baal, Bel, or Belus, nor with the Gaelic *teine*, fire. Its origin and its primary meaning appear to be beyond the skilled etymologists. The Scottish quarter days were Beltane, Hallowmas, Candlemas, and Lammass. In this connection, Beltane is the first day of May.

The most complete account Jamieson records of the modern survivals of Beltane observance is taken from the Beltane proceedings at Callendar in Perthshire. There the company of holiday makers marked a little trench round a portion of the moor sufficient to hold the party. The beltane cake was cooked at the beltane fire and was cut into as many pieces as there were persons present. One piece was daubed with charcoal. They then drew the pieces as lots, and the one who drew the daubed piece was called the beltane carlin. He was made to jump over the fire; was pelted with the shells of the eggs which had formed the beltane feast; and for some weeks after was spoken of as one dead.

Eggs always formed part of the rural feast of Beltein. It is said that the Gauls called the sun Bel or Belus in consequence of their communication with the Phœnicians. The symbol of the egg might also be borrowed from them, for they represented the heavenly bodies as oviform, and worshipped an egg in the orgies of Bacchus, as an image of the world. The Persians celebrated the day by presents of eggs. Plato in the *Timæus*, that strange collection of queernesses, speaks of the universe—not the world—as egg-shaped. Our own King Alfred, in his translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, where the *Timæus* is summarised so far as the creation of the universe is concerned, introduces in his metrical Lay the idea of the egg, which Boethius had not



included in his summary. Alfred applies the simile of the egg to the universe with our earth as the yolk, and gives it thus in his rugged verse<sup>1</sup>:—

Thou hast established	through Thy strong might,
King of war-hosts,	in wondrous wise
The earth so firmly	that she inclineth
Naught to one side ;	nor may she sink
This way nor that way	more than was wont,
By naught upheld	of earthly nature.
It is equally easy	upward or downward
For this earth of men	to move at will.
This is most like	to an egg, where lieth
The yolk in the middle,	yet the shell moveth
Around outside.	So standeth the world
Still in its station,	with the streams round it,
The stirring floods,	the air and stars,
While the gleaming shell	round all glideth
Every day,	and long hath done so.

We, Christians, rightly congratulate ourselves on our emancipation from the superstitions of paganism. The more thoughtless among us make light of the pagan methods or supposed methods of marking the flight of time. The more careless among us are inclined to be amused at the earnestness or supposed earnestness of our far off predecessors in their endeavours to make very sure of the right day for their special worships in each year. We have our almanacs, which tell us in each year which of the possible days is Easter Day, and not one in ten thousand even thinks of any anxiety as to the correctness of the day fixed. We have our wrist watches by day, our repeaters at night. It is well for all of us now and then to imagine all such helps completely swept away; to imagine ourselves feeling that our daily food, our life itself, absolutely depends upon the punctuality of our propitiation of the powers of nature, whether malevolent or beneficent. In such a frame of mind, we cannot without a feeling of mystery, of solemnity, gaze upon, meditate upon, the configurations of collected masses of stones, set with precision in regular order, with marked characteristics varying in various districts, all telling we know not in its fulness what of the many purposes of those who set them up. We cannot but feel that very much of the thoughtful parts of natural religion which the collocation of the stones represents has passed away and eludes our attempts at realisation. The mind that dwells long and seriously on such questions becomes inclined to hold that no suggestion of purpose is too abstruse for possible acceptance. It is wholesome to set before ourselves, for careful comparison, the druid priest

<sup>1</sup> See *King Alfred's version of Boethius*, by Dr W. F. Sedgefield, Oxford University Press, page 213; and *King Alfred's Books*, by Bishop G. F. Browne, S.P.C.K., page 342.

working his circle with infallible certainty to determine times and seasons, and to mark the flight of time by day and night, and Alfred the Christian King burning his candles.

Among the many questions which force themselves upon the mind when these Aberdeenshire circles are visited on a large scale is this :—Are the stones, other than the Recumbent Stone and Flankers, set round the circle on a uniform plan, or are they dotted about here and there on the circumference in a rough and ready way? It will have been seen from previous remarks that so far as practical results are concerned this question does not matter much, for the magician would soon learn the astronomical bearings of his stones even if they were casually placed. But it would be of great importance to the general question of traditional placing if it could be shewn that the stones are placed by rule. The rough observations and measurements we had made were decidedly in favour of some general rule of placing, a rule probably not carried out with mathematical accuracy. For “probably” the general effect of our observations would be to suggest “certainly.”

We ventured to enter into communication with the Principal of the University of Aberdeen, of which Lord Cowdray was Lord Rector, with a view to obtaining some scientific evidence on this important point. Sir George Adam Smith most kindly entered into the suggestion and communicated with the Professor of Natural Philosophy, Dr Niven. Two of the assistant members of the staff of that Faculty, Dr Fyvie and Dr Geddes, came out to Dunecht and made a rough survey of the three nearest circles. They came again a few days later and made accurate surveys, drawing out the three plans which are re-produced on smaller scale in Plate I. The circles were Midmar, Sin Hinny, and Castle Fraser.

The method of testing the orderliness of the placing which was suggested was kindly accepted by them. It was, to regard the Recumbent Stone and Flankers as lying in a tangential line, the middle point of the Recumbent Stone being the point of touch. From that point, as closely as it could be identified, measured lines were taken to the several stones of the circle, and the angle of each line to the tangential base line was taken accurately. That seemed a simple plan of determining the answer to the main question of placing by rule. An astronomical question of high importance was involved, obviously, and therefore the line of true north was added. In this connection we may state here what has already been stated, that Sir Norman Lockyer rates two of these three circles, Midmar and Sin Hinny, as unaltered solstitial circles, with a normal line to the north-east, and the third, Castle Fraser, as a stellar circle, with an azimuth N.  $20^{\circ} 51'$  E., and a date either B.C. 1680 or B.C. 570. Thus Midmar and Sin Hinny should be alike in the placing of the stones, if a general rule was in use, while the placing of Castle Fraser might perhaps be expected

to differ from the others. As a fact, however, Castle Fraser and Sin Hinny are much more alike on our scientific plan than either is with Midmar.

It should be noted that though Sir Norman describes the Midmar circle as preserved intact, that remark can only apply strictly to the Recumbent Stone and Flankers. The circle was evidently completely tidied up when its area was included in the new kirkyard. The ground was completely levelled and laid in gravel. The stones are for the most part of no great size. The distances from one another are of such character that one cannot say with precision how many there were on the circumference of the circle. It is quite possible that some of them were lying down, as in other cases, and were removed while the ground was being levelled and set up again rather by guess as to where they originally were, presumably without any idea that important astronomical questions might depend upon the correctness of their replacement.

Looking at the plans for Sin Hinny and Castle Fraser, we see that the tangent lines are practically equally inclined to the true north ; a difference of one degree under such rough conditions being negligible. The first stone on the left has fallen at Castle Fraser and the place where it stood is not certain ; there is a difference of 7 degrees between the alignment of its supposed place and that of the standing stone at Sin Hinny. The second stone is missing at Castle Fraser, and here as at Midmar we have no comparison with the Sin Hinny stone.

The third stone is present in all three circles, and the angles  $113^{\circ}$ ,  $114^{\circ}$ ,  $115^{\circ}$ , may be taken as unmistakably the same angle.

The next stone is missing at Midmar. The angles  $96^{\circ}$  and  $97^{\circ}$  at the other circles may be taken as the same angle.

The next stone is missing at Castle Fraser. The other angles are  $88^{\circ}$  and  $80^{\circ}$ . The angles as between one stone and another are so much alike as to suggest a general rule. I suspect a wrong replacing of the Midmar stone.

The next stone is present in all the circles. The angles  $69^{\circ}$ ,  $66^{\circ}$ ,  $62^{\circ}$ , are at least interestingly alike.

There remain three stones at Sin Hinny, two at Castle Fraser and two at Midmar. Again the placing at Midmar seems doubtful ; its  $40^{\circ}$  is curiously like the Castle Fraser  $41^{\circ}$  for the last stone but one, but its  $10^{\circ}$  for the last of the stones is too far off the Castle Fraser  $19^{\circ}$  to be regarded as roughly on the same plan. The Sin Hinny  $12^{\circ}$  may fairly be equated with  $10^{\circ}$  at Midmar. The two Sin Hinny  $51^{\circ}$  and  $31^{\circ}$  take the place of the one Midmar  $40^{\circ}$  and the one Castle Fraser  $41^{\circ}$ . That is, the Midmar stone and the Castle Fraser practically bisect the angle between the  $51^{\circ}$  and the  $31^{\circ}$  of the two Sin Hinny stones. Inasmuch as we can scarcely—if at all—fit in twelve stones in all at Midmar and Castle Fraser, this looks like a rule that if there are eleven in all, the last

but one, the tenth stone, shall bisect the angle between the tenth and the eleventh in a twelve-stone circle.

These three plans thus raise very interesting questions, the solution of which may serve to raise the opinion of the skill and knowledge of our predecessors even higher than we have on other grounds put it.

Is it too much to suggest that a learned University might make similar plans of some of the other circles which have some of their stones remaining besides the Recumbent Stone and Flankers? Of those which we have ourselves visited and measured, Tomnagorn, Cothie Muir, and Loanhead of Daviot, suggest themselves as the most suitable. When that has been done, the question of the astronomical uses of the placing, by a magician standing at the centre of the Recumbent Stone, or more probably at a fixed point at the centre of the circle as is suggested by a flat stone there, could be entered upon, or, possibly, dismissed from consideration.

We have seen that Sir Norman Lockyer rates Sin Hinny and Midmar as solstitial circles, which means that the normal line points to the north-east, and rates Castle Fraser as a stellar circle, with azimuth N.  $20^{\circ} 51'$  E. There is on the face of it a decided difference between these conclusions and the evidence of the plans which we give. In those plans we are faced with the fact that the base line is at practically the same angle with the true north line at Castle Fraser and Sin Hinny. That gives the same alignment to these two circles, whereas Sir Norman makes one of the two solstitial and the other stellar. The plans give the two azimuths N.  $35^{\circ}$  E. and N.  $34^{\circ}$  E., both stellar. The plan gives the Midmar azimuth N.  $49^{\circ}$  E., which is solar and nearly solstitial.

These differences are a cautionary indication of the difficulty of accurate measurement with the best modern instruments and the best modern calculations. They may serve to warn us of the difficulties our far off ancestors must have had in erecting the stones in exact accordance with the plans which we are now fairly entitled to assume that they had.

Since these four chapters were written and paged we have received a curious confirmation of our views from Colonel Tilney, whom we quoted on page 27 and shall quote again in connection with cup-marking on our stones. He writes:—"When I was working out the problem of how to read the heavens at night as an accurate compass, the first step I took was to find out how natives, Indians, Arabs, backwoods-men, know their way and time at night. In the course of my investigations I came across a half-caste who was in the feather trade, and who had spent many years of his life in Western and Central Africa. He told me of 'native circles' of trees, not stones, by whose aid the priests could tell the time at night, the date, the time of the year, as well as give true bearings. This statement has since been confirmed to me personally by travellers and natives."

## CHAPTER V

### *Dun Echt, or The Barmekyn of Echt.*

Origin of the name Echt.—Description of the fortifications.—The name Barmekyn.—Barbicans.—Barbacanes at Tripoli, Tyre, Pisa.—The Crusaders.—The gold coin of Islam.—Importance of the site.—Dr John Hill Burton.—The Catertuns.—The Norman Dykes.—Professor John Stuart.—Mr James Skene.—The Old Statistical Account.—Dr J. Mitchell.—Remarkable noises “on the toppe of the hill of Duneycht.”—Gavin Douglas’s Bramkin of Troy.—Paper by W. Douglas Simpson.—Fortifications of Benachie.—The parish of Echt.—Its Druidical Temples.—The House of Echt and Housedale.—Successive owners.

BEFORE we enter upon a description of the Stone Circles in the neighbourhood of Dunecht, it will be well to say something of the outstanding feature of the neighbourhood, the Barmekyn of Echt.

Taking Echt to be a great chieftain’s name, possibly an early form of the name we know as Hugh, we may take Dun-Echt as the original name of the almost royal fortress which we call usually by its later, and as we shall see oriental name, the Barmekyn of Echt. A different derivation of the name Echt will be found at page 50.

Our Plate II shews the condition of one of the stone walls as seen from above; Plate III shews or endeavours to shew the tops of the concentric stone walls and turf walls, as seen from below.

The large area enclosed by the innermost stone wall was planted with trees long ago, and some time ago the trees were cut down. The trunks had to be brought down through the several walls. It is needless to say that almost irreparable mischief was of necessity wrought by this forced passage through skilfully contrived fortifications. But after spending some hours of intent study of the principle of the fortifications, there is no difficulty in describing their main features.

There have evidently been three to five chief gateways in each wall, 9 ft. or 9 ft. 6 in. in width, and smaller entrances of about 4 ft. 6 in. When you get through the outer gate, you are in a sunk trench with the next wall blocking your way, with no gate in sight. You turn to the left or the right along the sunk way between the two walls to look for a gate. You find here and there a low stone wall along the middle of the ditch, which would force an enemy to go in single file, the full breadth of the ditch from top of wall to top of wall being 15 ft. Here and there, too, there are stone projections on one side or the other, all preventing a rush of a mass of men. Finally you come to a gate in the inner wall, its approach from the ditch being hampered as before. Having got through this second gate you proceed as before to look for a third gate, your way hampered as before. When you get to the stone walls, you see on one side or on both sides of the front of the gateway, the

remains of a semi-circular recess, in which a man could stand as guard by day or by night. This specially interesting feature does not appear to be mentioned in any of the printed accounts. After further zigzagging you get through the fourth wall, and then after one more voyage you find one of the final gates of entrance to the great central area, which is rather elliptical than circular. The distance between the fourth and the fifth walls is 36 ft. from top of wall to top of wall, in place of the 15 ft. between the other walls. The innermost wall shews a height of about 9 ft., the next to it 6 ft.

We made the distance between the inner base of the innermost wall and the outer base of the outermost to be 100 ft., and the dimensions of the interior space about 300 ft. from north to south and rather less from east to west. But the dimensions of the interior space were not carefully taken<sup>1</sup>.

The word Barmekyn, variously spelled, is said to be derived from "the Norman Barbican." To those of us who know the gates of the City of York, two at least of which, the Walm Gate and the Mickle Gate, still retain their Barbicans, anything less like a Barbican than the Barmekyn of Echt cannot well be imagined. Those Barbicans are long narrow battlemented porches to the main gate, themselves having portcullis gates at their entrance. The besiegers had to fight their way through the outer gate and through the long straight stone approach before they could get at the gate of the city.

But the name and the idea of "barbican" go much further back than any such buildings as the York Barbicans. It is understood to have been an arab name, or moorish. One Willebrand of Oldenborg, who wrote an Itinerary of the Holy Land in the year 1211, gives a description of the Barbicans of Tripoli and the Barbicans of Tyre. The Barbicans (in the plural) of Tripoli are described thus :—"Certain special sinuous barbicans make the approaches to the gates intricate." Of Tyre Willebrand tells us this :—"There are five various gates disposed here and there by which is the entrance to the city. Those who enter by them find the way so intricate that they seem to be wandering about in the labyrinth of Dædalus." It would be difficult to find a better description of the way in to the central portion of the Barmekyn of Echt. Still earlier, in 1156, the History of Pisa tells us that in that year they made barbacanes round the city. We may fairly take it that in the sinuous Barmekyn of Echt we have the oriental name brought back by the Crusaders of 1096 or 1147. No doubt its idea and its construction were earlier than its name, and are an evidence of real skill in fortification among our primæval Scottish folk. It is an interesting coincidence that at Tripoli, as at Echt, there were five gates to be got through before you came to the real entry of the city.

<sup>1</sup> In the careful paper mentioned on page 49, the roughly circular space is given a diameter of 340 feet.

There is another coincidence, of an unusually remarkable character. We have suggested that Crusaders may have brought the knowledge of the oriental barbicanes to Scotland, and applied the name to the fortifications of the Dun of Echt. We should naturally not expect to find in our time any definite evidence in favour of the presence in this part of Aberdeenshire of travellers from oriental lands in the times of the Crusades. The first important Crusade set out in 1096 and failed in four or five years. In 1823 there was dug up at Monymusk<sup>1</sup>, about six miles north-west of the Barmekyn, a coin of Islam, struck at Marakash (Morocco) in the year 491 of the Hegira, that is, A.D. 1097, the year of the arrival of the Crusade.

Dr John Hill Burton, in his *History of Scotland* (1867), describes in his first volume, pages 94, 95, the difficulties, natural and constructive, which the Roman invaders of Caledonia had to face and overcome in their progress northward, after leaving the great strath through which the Isla flows to meet the Tay.

Having pushed past the vitrified fort which guards the entrance to Glen-Isla, they found themselves in the north part of Forfarshire, at the entrance to the Grampians. This, the only entrance, was strongly guarded by two fortified conical detached hills, the two Catertuns, the one called the White Catertun, because the concentric fortifications on it are of stone, the other the Black Catertun, because its concentric fortifications are of turf. The White Catertun has four concentric rings of stones, the innermost with a diameter of about 80 paces. The external ring is composed of large loose stones, 100 feet thick at bottom and at least 25 at top. It is surrounded by a ditch, and a single earthen breastwork surrounds the ditch.

When this entrance was forced, and the Romans got through and over the mountains, they had passed, as Bede tells us (H. E. iii. 4), the boundary which divided the Southern from the Northern Picts. They had reached the territory now known as Kincardine and the Mearns. Professor John Stuart, writing in 1822 on the progress of the Romans to the Moray Firth, takes them on to Stonehaven, and thence across the Dee to the Norman Dykes, which he regards as a corruption of Roman Dykes. He found there a great camp of 80 Scots acres. He takes them up by way of Inverurie, in the neighbourhood of which they must have made a great camp, and there were facing the great fortifications on the top of an insulated hill, eight or nine miles from the Norman Dykes—the Barmekyn of Echt.

Dr Burton, in his account, passes straight from the Catertuns to the Barmekyn. Some 40 miles north from the Catertuns, he says, at Echt in Aberdeenshire, the detached conical hill called Barmekin is crowned by a fortress of five concentric ramparts, in some respects the rival of the Catertun.

<sup>1</sup> New Statistical Account, *Monymusk*.

The ramparts are not so vast, but they are in a higher state of preservation. There are some remnants of a face of masonry, built of course without cement, as if the ramparts had been not mere heaps of stones but regularly built. The device for covering the entrance by zigzagging it through the several ramparts is still visible.

When Professor Stuart wrote of the Barmekyn in 1822, as stated above, Mr James Skene proceeded to examine in detail this "very interesting remnant of antiquity, of which no plan or notice has been hitherto laid before the public." His paper follows Professor Stuart's paper in *Arch. Scot.* ii. Some of its details will be found on page 52.

Curiously enough, a long notice of the Barmekyn had appeared more than twenty years before James Skene said that no notice had been laid before the public. The account appears in the description of the Parish of Echt in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland, about the year 1798, written by Mr Henderson, the Minister of Echt. We must take Mr Henderson's remarks, in text and notes, on the Barmekin of Echt in full, being glad to have an account of its condition 120 years ago, especially as he says definitely that tradition is silent on this remarkable series of works.

The remains, he says, of two dry stone walls, and of three ditches without these, are distinctly visible. The walls and the ditches are all circular.

The inner wall appears to have been about 12 ft. thick, the outer only five or six. The circumference of the inner wall is about 330 yards, that of the outer ditch about 500. The distance between the inner wall and the inner ditch is about 16 yards; between the inner wall and the outer ditch about 36. There are five different entrances into the area enclosed within the inner wall; one on the E., one on the S., one on the S.W., one on the W., one on the N. All the entrances are in an oblique direction. The outer wall is said to be of more modern erection than the inner, and to have been made by stones taken from the inner wall, as a fence for trees which one of the proprietors of the estate of Echt planted in the last [17th] century on the summit of the hill, but of which there are now no vestiges remaining. This seems not improbable, as it is much more entire than the inner wall, and besides there is no entrance left through it into the inner area, although all the five entrances above mentioned are very perceptible through the ditches and the inner wall. On the S. of the Barmekin, and at a distance of about two furlongs from the foot of it, Mr Henderson states that there is one cairn, or large heap of stones; and another on the N. at the like distance.

Dr J. Mitchell of the University of Aberdeen carefully examined the Barmekyn in 1825, and reported on it. At that time the five concentric walls were in a better state of preservation than now. No cement had been used, but where the walls were best preserved, they were found to exhibit a regular



structure of masonry, squared and fitted with skill, particularly at the gateways, of which there appeared to have been three on the south side and two on the north. Dr Mitchell found that while "the general breadth of the access was nine feet, it was narrowed by the enclosing walls of the traverses to three feet only, and was commanded by the rampart above." The inner rampart shewed greater care and strength in its structure, being at least 12 ft. thick at base, and several feet of its height remained entire. The interior enclosure was nearly circular, 300 ft. in diameter, about one acre in area. This must evidently mean an acre Scots, for a circle with radius of 50 yards is not far off 8000 square yards, and the English acre is 4840 square yards. Miss MacLagan gives on Plate XI of her book<sup>1</sup> a considerably larger area of enclosure than this. She gives to each of the four ditches a width of 15 ft., to the innermost stone wall a base 12 ft. thick, and to the other walls only about half that thickness at base.

There is a very interesting account of remarkable noises heard "upon the toppe of the hill of Duneycht, or to write truly Dun Picte," where were "to be seen old ruined walles and trenshes which the people by a receaved tradition affirm to have been built at such tyme as the Pictes wer maisters of Marre." The noises were "the beating of drumms, the taptoos giving first the Scottish marche, then the Irish march, then the English marche." Those who had been "much of ther lyves abroad in the German warres affirmed that they could discerne by ther hearing upon the drumme the marches of French, Dutch, Danes &c." "The Laird of Skeene and his lady, the Laird of Echt, &c., and my owne wife then living ther in Skeene all that winter" heard the noises frequently. The full account is to be found in Gordon's *History of Scots Affairs*, vol. i. pp. 56-58, Aberdeen, 1841.

We find a very interesting use of the word which we call Barmekyn in Gavin Douglas's translation of the *Æneid*. At the point where the Greeks breached the defences of Troy to admit the wooden horse,

Quhat will 3e more? The bramkin down we rent,  
And walles of our ciete we maid patent.

That is, they got through the outer defences, and came in view of the actual city walls. We owe this reference to Professor R. A. S. Macalister.

Since this account was passed for press, I have been favoured by Mr W. Douglas Simpson, M.A., F.S.A. Scot., with a reprint of a paper by him on the Barmekyn of Echt in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (vol. vi. Fifth Series, 1919-20, pages 45 to 50) of which Society I was for many years a Fellow.

Mr Douglas Simpson's paper is full of interest. His measurements are very careful, and his plans most helpful.

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<sup>1</sup> Hill Forts, Stone Circles, etc. Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1875.

The fortifications on Benachie are outside the purpose of this present book. But Benachie is so marked a feature of our district, and the fortifications are of such extraordinary interest in themselves, and present so many curious problems, that it seems right to direct the attention of any one who is considering the general antiquities of the district to Miss Maclagan's full and valuable account on pages 32-38, and that lady's remarkable illustrations on her Frontispiece and Plates I, II, III, and IV.

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*The parish of Echt.*

The Reverend Alexander Henderson tells us in the Old Statistical Account that

"The parish is nearly square, 4 miles each way. The Forbeses sold the estate of Echt about 1730 to the late Earl of Fife, who settled it on his second son the Hon. Alexander Duff the present (A.D. 1794) proprietor. He removed his place of residence in the year 1768 from the old house at Echt to Housedale, about two English miles off, where he built a commodious house and offices and made out a garden of two acres, a great part of which is surrounded with a stone and lime wall of about 12 feet high. He also enclosed and cultivated about 80 Scotch acres of moor, and planted 150 acres of hill ground with Scotch fir, pine, larix, oak, beech, mountain ash, &c., and they are all at present in a thriving condition."

"There are in the parish the remains of three Druidical temples." In connection with the existence of these three Druidical temples in the parish, it is well to note the concluding sentence of Mr Henderson's report 126 years ago. "Little of the parish is enclosed, except Mr Duff's farm at Housedale above mentioned." Enclosure means stone walls, and stone walls mean Druidical temples broken up to build walls.

Echt, as we saw in our account of the Barmekyn, is supposed to have been a personal name. The Minister who wrote the New Statistical Account of the parish remarks that its name is said to be from Each, a horse, because when a Caledonian army was in great straits for water, a horse pawed at a particular place, and they dug there and found water.

The actual spot where this is said to have happened is within one of the walls of the Barmekyn, where the ground is still wet. Lord Cowdray had the place excavated but nothing was found. The stones of the wall are specially well laid just there, as though it was a well-known source of water in the times when the Barmekyn was used as a fortress.

We have remains of the three Temples in the parish of Echt. But there is little left of two of them, and the third appears to have been of a type unlike the others in the neighbourhood.

Plate V shews three fine stones on the farm of Wester Echt. They are evidently on the circumference of a very large circle. Taking normal lines from the centre of the chord between each pair, the point of intersection, which gives the centre of the original circle, is at least as far from the three stones as the whole diameter of many of the circles.

The tallest stone is 9 ft. high, a massive stone, evidently a flanker reft of its companion and the precious charge they used to guard. In a collection of stones at its inner base there are two, of two feet each, set against it as the props—if they be merely props—are set against recumbent stones, as we shall see at Auquhorthies. These three stones are survivals of a great monument, which must have been very fine, shewing up on a magnificent plateau. Even as only three standing stones, they shew up well from the Echt Lodge of Dunecht House. When all the stones were there, the effect must have been noble. It is on record that there used to be nine of them, the other six being

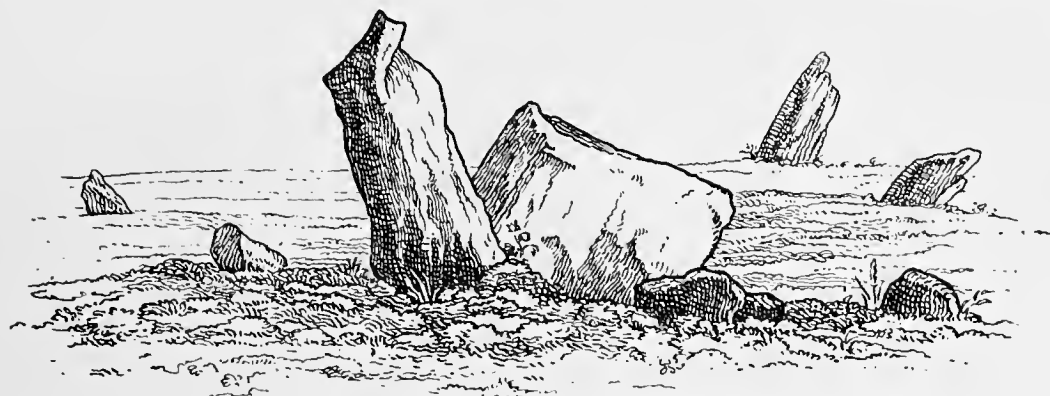


Figure 1. Recumbent Stone and Flanker, Wester Echt (from an old drawing)

removed some 80 years ago, according to an old man who in 1900 remembered them as a boy.

But, fortunately, we have a drawing of the stones shewing them as they were in 1822. From this it appears that the missing stones were not there a hundred years ago. The drawing was published by James Skene in his article on the "hill-fort of Barmekyn of Echt," in *Archæologia Scotica*, ii. 324, Plate 8. It is reproduced in Figure 1. Our view of the three stones was meant to be taken from the same end as Skene's drawing. As it is, the different positions of the middle stone have a puzzling effect. In Skene's time the recumbent stone was still in existence, and a marvellous great block it must have been. The two stones lying near are presumably the two props which an unusually wholesome instinct induced the stone-breakers to preserve on the spot. Mr Skene gives the diameter of the circle as 96 ft., and the dimensions of the stone we now call the recumbent stone and he calls the Altar Stone as "10 ft. by 6 ft., above ground."

Mr Skene records that "on the skirts of the Barmekyne itself there are three Druidical circles still existing, two on the south side and one on the north, which last has the misfortune to encumber a cultivated field, a situation it has little chance of enjoying long. That on the south side of the hill, being the largest and most entire, is so successfully buried under a clump of trees as to have rendered any examination of it perfectly unsatisfactory." We must be careful not to confuse these three Druidical Temples near the Barmekyn with the remains of three Druidical Temples with which the Old Statistical Account credits the parish of Echt. Mr Skene's three appear to be Wester Echt, on the north of Barmekyn, and Sin Hinny and Midmar on the south. Mr Henderson's appear to be Wester Echt, Nether Corskie, and Garlogie.

Mr Skene's three Druidical circles on the skirts of the Barmekyn puzzled Mr Stuart, the author of the *Sculptured Stones*. Writing of the original site of the stone at Dunecht, shewn in our Plate LIII, in his Plate 124 in his second volume, page 69, he says, "I was desirous of examining these stone circles in connection with the site of this stone. But a personal search which I made, and a more thorough one made by order of Lord Lindsay among the wooded slopes was unsuccessful."

The second relic of a Druidical circle is at Nether Corskie.

The two stones shewn on Plate V stand in a field on the left side of the road leading from Waterton of Echt to Castle Fraser. The local interpretation of the name makes it mean the lower end of the "crossing" by which people went up the hill towards the Don. The farm house at which the passer up the hill emerges on to the Castle Fraser road is called Upper Corskie.

They are handsome stones, the one over 12 ft. high, the other 7½ ft. They are only 10 ft. apart, and they are clearly the flankers of a recumbent stone which has completely disappeared, as have all the other stones of the circle. The alignment of the normal line would be at least considerably to the north of north-east. There is a large cup on one of the stones, but the most remarkable feature is a pair of large mirrors, a foot across, or a mirror and its case, one with the usual two-ringed handle, and with a comb. It is unnecessary to emphasise this very curious fact of the incision of one of the regular Pictish figures upon a pillar of a stone circle, of which we shall have much to say later on. The advanced stage of decay of the surface of the stone may be taken as evidence of a very early date for the incision of the mirrors.

The third Druidical Temple in the parish of Echt is presumably the "Standing Stones of Echt" at the eastern extremity of the parish, south of Garlogie. There is not a recumbent stone, and the tallest stones of the eight are to the north. Mr Ritchie has enabled us to give a representation of this circle, Plate XXXIV.

We can add something to the passage quoted on page 50 from the Old Statistical Account.

An Alexander Forbes of Echt had a daughter married to Alexander Burnet of Leys about 1455. In April 1469 we have a charter by John Earl of Marr and Garviach to John Forbes, grandson and apparent heir of Marjory Stewart, Lady of Echt, of the lands of Echt released by her in his favour. She was a granddaughter of the Wolf of Badenoch.

The only relic left of the old House of Echt, at Old Echt a short half mile west of the cross roads in Echt, is a doorway in a garden wall. The Forbeses appear to have built Housedale, the present gardener's house of Dunecht, and made the gardens. Above the door of entrance in the garden wall, in immediate connection with the house, there is inscribed on a dressed stone tablet

A.F. K.M. 1705

This was 90 years before the Old Statistical Account, and 63 years before the Duff proprietor is said to have moved from the old house of Echt to Housedale. The initials are those of Alexander Forbes and Katharine Melville his wife, married at Edinburgh 21 February 1696. She had been the wife of Thomas Dunbar of Grange and thus by Scottish custom was designated Lady Grange, a title well known in Scottish history. The Forbeses sold Housedale in 1726 to William Duff of Braco, the great money-lender of the century in that part of Caledonia. His career was remarkable. He was born in 1697, married Jean Grant of Grant in 1728, two years after his purchase of Housedale or its transfer to him in connection with his money-lending. In 1735 he became Baron Braco, and in 1759 Earl of Fife, both in the peerage of Ireland, and in September 1763 he died. Jean his widow wrote a letter from Housedale, apparently her dower house, on June 6, 1787, signing herself "J. Fife." She died half a year later, January 16, 1788, aged 82. She was the mother of the second and third Earls. Her son Alexander, the third Earl, on whom her husband had settled Echt, married a daughter of a neighbour, George Skene of Skene, and his grandson James, the fifth Earl, succeeded to the estate of Skene, and was created Baron Skene of Skene in the United Kingdom. His son Alexander William George, the three leading family names, was sixth and last Earl of Fife and first Duke. He married Royalty.

Echt and Housedale and Dunecht House passed away from Forbeses and Duffs, and after a time came to the Premier Earl of Scotland, the 19th Earl of Crawford, who made Dunecht House a magnificent structure, with a lovely Italian Church as the Chapel of the House. From a vault under the Chapel the Earl's body was stolen, and was not recovered till the second year after the death. A monument has been erected at the spot in the grounds,

near the house, where the body was eventually found buried. The inscription, dated 1882, runs thus :

Astra Castra  
Numen Lumen  
Munimen  
[Heaven my stronghold  
The Lord my light  
My defence.]

The Forbeses, too, could write or quote Latin. Under the initials and date given on the previous page there are incised the words

*Haec corpus sidera mentem*

The verb which should have begun the next line, stating the effect of the gardens or the fruits on the body and of the stars on the mind, is not given.

## CHAPTER VI

An early Report on Aberdeenshire Circles.—Lustration by water.—The Sin Hinny Circle.—Cup-marking.—Excavations at Sin Hinny.—The Midmar Circle.—The Seat of Justice.—Standing Stones as places of assembly.—The Circle at Castle Fraser.—Outlying monoliths.

WE may fitly begin our descriptions of Aberdeenshire Circles by giving a copy of an early paper in *Archæologia Scotica* i. 314, by Dr James Garden, Professor of Theology, King's College, Aberdeen, on the Circular Stone Monuments in Scotland. Read Dec. 4, 1766. The mention of "the broad stone toward the south" should be specially noted. The second of the circles mentioned appears to be Old Bourtree Bush.

"Two of the largest and most remarkable of these monuments that ever I saw are yet to be seen at a place called Auchincorthie, in the shire of Mernes, five miles distant from Aberdeen.

"One has two circles of stones; whereof the exterior circle consists of 13 great stones, besides two that are fallen and the broad stone towards the south, about three yards high above ground and 7 or 8 paces distant one from another, the diameter being 24 large paces. The interior circle is about 3 paces distant from the other, and the stones thereof 3 feet above ground. Towards the East of this monument, at 26 paces distance, there is a big stone fast in the ground and level with it, in which is a cavity partly natural and partly artificial, that will contain I should guess, no less than a Scotch gallon of water.

"The other monument, which is full as large if not larger than that which I have already described and distant from it about a bow-shot of ground, consists of 3 circles having the same common centre. The stones of the greatest circle are about 3 yards and those of the lesser circles about 3 feet high above ground, the innermost circle 3 paces diameter and the stones standing close together.

"Such stones are called Standing Stones, Law Stones, Temple Stones."

It may be as well to state here that we do not propose to deal with the questions raised by Dr Garden's special description of a cavity which would hold a large quantity of water. It must suffice to say that lustration by water was a very wide spread feature of initiation into pagan religions, and may have been a regular practice of the pagan priests before entering upon their sacrificial functions. The thought of the laver of the Tabernacle and the Temple naturally occurs as an illustration. At Preasmaree, St Maelrubha's Grove, near Contin Church and in the grounds of the Mackenzies of Coul who use it as

their burial place, there are three circular basins on the upper edge of a great stone forming one side of an enclosure which has evidently been the Saint's sanctuary. The Minister of Contin has most kindly sent the dimensions of these basins. The stone itself is 5 ft. 8 in. long, 2 ft. 10 in. high, and 1 ft. 5 in. broad. The dimensions of the three basins, which lie on the narrow top in a straight line west to east are as follows,

- (1) 10 in. wide, 5 in. deep,
- (2) 11 in. wide,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in. deep,
- (3) 10 in. wide,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. deep.

We may further preface our description of the circles by reproducing a sheet of drawings of "Altar Stones" and Flankers (Plate IV) in ten of the circles we are to mention, and ground plans of two others. For this plate we are indebted to Mr A. L. Lewis and the authorities of the Anthropological Institute, in whose *Journal*, vol. xxx. New Series III. 1900, pages 56-73, a paper by Mr Lewis appeared on *The Stone Circles of Scotland*. At pages 67-70 Mr Lewis deals with a special type in Aberdeenshire, not found elsewhere so far as he knows, with a "so-called altar stone." He remarks *obiter* that it never could have been an Altar Stone; why, he does not make clear.

### *Description of the Circles at Sin Hinny, Midmar, and Castle Fraser.*

#### *The Circle at Sin Hinny.*

#### PLATES VI AND VII.

We take first the unusually complete circle in a small wood on the farm of Sun Honey, some three miles from Dunecht. No circle has been more discussed than this. Its name of Sun Honey is the phonetic spelling of the pronunciation of Sin Hinny; which is itself corrected by an official archaeologist into Sean Hinny. This Gaelic correction has not the authority of Colonel Forbes Leslie, who knew the circle and the locality intimately. We shall write it Sin Hinny. After our visit to this circle, we found an excellent description of it by Mr F. R. Coles, Assistant Keeper of the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, in their Proceedings for 1899-1900, vol. xxxiv. pages 181-187.

To reach the circle you go about a mile and a half from the Kirk of Echt towards Midmar, and turn up a farm road to the right, which brings you very near a little wood on your left, containing the circle. It is about three-quarters of a mile from Midmar Castle.

The recumbent stone and its supporters are shewn on Plate VII, and the whole circle on Plate VI. A careful examination of Plate VI is required



to discover the recumbent stone and supporters or flankers among the trunks of the trees on the right hand, and such of the nine other stones of the circle as are not hid by trees or stones. Sir Norman Lockyer makes the alignment solstitial, that is, north-east. Some remarks on the placing of the stones in this and other circles will be found at pages 42-44.

Colonel Forbes Leslie gives a drawing of the recumbent stone and flankers and three others of the stones in his *Early Races of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 215. A tinted drawing preserves the mystery of the stones better than a photograph does. Colonel Forbes Leslie has rather exaggerated the relative heights of the three pillars other than the flankers.

The recumbent stone is given by Mr Coles as 17 ft. 4 in. long, four and a half feet broad and two and a quarter thick, and as weighing 12 tons<sup>1</sup>. The theory is that it formerly stood on edge, and has long ago fallen forwards. On many accounts this is probable. A large piece has broken away from the right-hand corner of the top, and now lies on the ground in front. The stone is of unusual quality, close-grained grey granite, all of the standing stones of the circle being of the ordinary red granite of the district. The flanking pillars are very fine. The measurement of their height depends very much on where one stands. Mr Coles gives their height as 7 ft. 6 in. and 6 ft. 8 in. As at Midmar, from one position they appear to approximate to 9 ft.

The nine standing stones other than the supporters of the recumbent stone are set on a bank, so that you rise as you approach the ring of stones, and descend again when you enter the circle. The features of the interior space are noted in the description of excavations which follows this account.

There are gradations of height in these nine stones which cannot be accidental. As always, the flanking pillars are the tallest. The two stones to west of them are 6 ft. and 5 ft. 10 in. high, the two to the east are 6 ft. 9 in. and 6 ft. 8 in. high. Of the five others, three are 5 ft. 3 in., one is 4 ft. 6 in. and one 4 ft. 5 in. The stone to the east of the recumbent stone and its flankers is square and flat topped. The distances of the nine stones from one another vary from 25 ft. 6 in. to 20 ft. 4 in. The stones nearest to one another are the shorter stones; it is worthy of note that the shortest lie from north to east.

The circumference is not an exact circle. Its longer axis is from the northernmost to the southernmost stone, 87 ft. 6 in. The shorter axis is from north-west to a little south of east, 81 ft. 6 in. The recumbent stone and its flankers face towards the north-east, that is, towards the sunrise on Midsummer Day. We shall see as we go on what very wide bearing that fact probably has. The fact that this, like many of the circles, is not an exact circle, renders our use of the phrase "the centre of the circle" doubtful.

<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, Stuart gives the dimensions as upwards of 16 ft. long,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  broad, 3 thick. My own note of length is 15 ft.

In vol. xxii. of *Archæologia*, Soc. Ant. Lond., at pages 198–203, there is a communication from Mr James Logan, F.S.A. Edinburgh, to the Society of Antiquaries of London, “On several Circles of Stones in Scotland.” Among other circles which we shall have to mention, Mr Logan describes and gives a drawing of the circle at Sin Hinny. His drawing is very clear. It shews all of the twelve stones. His measurements should be compared with those of later times. They are as follows. The “altar” is 16 ft. 4 in. long, 4 ft. 6 in. broad where broadest, and 2 ft. 9 in. high; the flankers 7 ft. 6 in. and 6 ft. 7 in. high. The average distance of the stones from one another is 19 ft. Part of the “altar” has been broken off, and lies beside it. The date of the paper is 1827; it was published in 1829.

One feature of the recumbent stone is very marked: it has some very bold cup-markings. I had a rubbing taken of these in the autumn of 1919, from which our Plate VIII is made. As we shall see, this Plate introduces a question of high interest which deserves a chapter to itself, Chapter XIII.

This is not the place for a discussion on the many possible meanings and uses and occasions of the cup-marking of stones upright as well as recumbent, for which we find no conceivable connection with any Christian rite. But inasmuch as we are specially interested in the antiquities of this district, it is of interest to state that when my valued colleague, the late Romilly Allen, published his important paper on cup-markings on Scottish stones, while he recorded large numbers of cases in Inverness and other neighbouring counties, he only recorded six cases in Aberdeen, of which this was not one. Since that time many other examples have been found. Mr Ritchie of Port Elphinstone has photographed a considerable number in the district under consideration. In a few cases they look very much like charts of a constellation, in one case with a ring round prominent stars. I mentioned this astronomical resemblance in a lecture at Dunecht House in the autumn of 1920 in connection with this stone at Sin Hinny and the rubbing I had had made. Colonel Tilney, who has been quoted on pages 27 and 44, was one of the house party and went the next day to examine the stone. He reported on his return that he had found the Great Bear on the stone. It will be seen that our Plate VIII, which was being made at the time from the rubbing of the year before, has stellar resemblances. This point is carried further in Chapter XIII.

Mr Coles attributes the cups at Sin Hinny to the weathering of the stone, not to artificial production. He points out that there are not the marks of instruments, as in some cases he tells us there are. But the rapid rotation of a hard round-pointed piece of stone, helped by the application of sharp sand, would not leave any mark of instruments. Mr Coles very justly points out that if the recumbent stone once stood on its edge, almost all of the hollows would be under ground. It may be replied that that would have protected

the stone from being cup-marked by weathering. But it is a more substantial reply that we do not find the recumbent stones of these circles embedded in the ground; they have been laid on the hard surface, often hardened by a bedding of stones, keeping their upright place by their own great weight.

Another objection by Mr Coles is that there are no rings round the cups. But that would be fatal to a vast majority of our cup-markings. On this point, the 31 stones shewn in Mr Romilly Allen's paper lead to very conclusive results. Sixteen of the stones have no ring, some of them with crowds of cups. Fifteen have one ring or more. Three of those with a single ring have crowds of cups without rings; and on the whole there is an immense preponderance of ringless cups over ringed cups on stones that have any ring at all. We may safely dismiss the absence of a ring as any suggestion of the cup being due to weathering.

Curiously enough I find in the same volume of the Proceedings of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, of which I was for many years of my active work a member, an article by myself on the cup-markings of the *Saj di Gorone*, with an illustration from a photograph by one of my daughters. The *Saj (saxum) di Gorone* means the Stone of the Heel. It is a micaceous boulder, lying on the moor near Gignese, above Stresa, in the neighbourhood of Mottarone. The peasant girl who told me its patois name shewed me that the lower lip of very many of the countless cups on the sloping sides of the boulder had been partially worn away in the course of long time, leaving the appearance of a little amphitheatre into which a small heel would fit. It may be noted that in Inverness-shire the cups are known as "Fairies Foot-marks." There were no rings round the cups, and there was no sign of tool marks.

We can carry the idea of a heel a little further. There is a horizontal flat slab of mica schist near Zmutt in the Zermatt valley, 10 ft. by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ft., about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. thick<sup>1</sup>. The stone is called the Heidenplatte, "the flat stone of the heathen." It has about 100 circular hollows on its surface, from 8 in. to 2 in. across, and from 3 in. to half an inch deep. The tradition in Valais is that the Heidenplatte was the stone on which the pagan orators stood to address the assembly round them, and the rotation of the orators' heels produced in the course of time these hollows! It must be added that in a large proportion of the ringed cups shewn in Romilly Allen's paper, the ring is only carried half round the hole. This produces exactly the appearance of the print of a heel shod with iron.

We may now extract from the first volume of Stuart's monumental work on the Sculptured Stones of Scotland (Spalding Club) an account of excavations at Sin Hinny some seventy years ago.

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 8 December 1898.

*Circle at Sunhoney, Stuart l. xxi.*

This circle, in the parish of Midmar, is situated on a commanding eminence, from which the ground falls away on all sides. The British Hill-fort of the Barmekyn of Echt is about a mile distant towards the north-east. The circle is entire, and appears to be slightly raised above the surrounding ground, and consists of twelve stones of the red granite of the district, except a long recumbent stone placed between two upright pillars on the south side, which is of a small-grained grey granite. The pillars are from five to seven feet in height, and the recumbent stone is upwards of sixteen feet in length, about four and a half feet in breadth, and three feet in thickness.

Within the circle there is a flat cairn, about sixty-four feet in diameter, of stones, raised nearly a foot above the rest of the area, and going down to the subsoil. In the centre of this cairn, through a part of it eight feet in diameter, were found deposits of incinerated bones, with some charcoal and black mould, but in no great quantity. This part of the cairn differed slightly in construction from the rest, as the stones were not quite so closely packed, and were mostly marked with fire. At the outer circumference of the cairn, on the south side, was found what seemed to have been a deposit of some kind, as concave stones were placed so as to form a circular cist; and some fragments, apparently of a rude stone vessel, were found forming part of the enclosure; but everything of animal substance had entirely disappeared. At the foot of several of the pillars, at a depth of from eighteen inches to two feet, flat stones appeared, similar to those which are generally found placed above and under the cinerary urns; but any deposits which may have been inserted had entirely disappeared. The richness of the soil, a deep black loam, might partly account for this. All the soil appeared to have been brought into the circle, and, except in front of the pillars, seemed almost everywhere to cover quantities of stones, though these, except in the centre, were not disposed in a regular cairn. The soil seemed also to differ from that on the outside of the circle, in which stones only occur occasionally. At the base of the pillars the ground seemed, in various cases, to have been dug down into the subsoil, so as to form a pit about two and a half feet in depth. A ridge of loose stones, like the foundations of a dyke, runs round between the standing stones. Some of the latter had a small semicircular pavement of stones in front of them, and they all stood on deposits of middle-sized boulder stones.

*The Circle at Midmar New Kirk.*

## PLATES IX AND X.

We may take next the neighbouring circle of Midmar, which lies in the churchyard of the present parish church.

The Kirk of Midmar was formerly in its natural place, near the Seat of Justice and near the ancient (and modern) site of the commanding fortress of Midmar Castle. The Seat of Justice is shewn on Plate VI. It is a remarkable mound or bass, of large dimensions, hollowed at top to such an extent that a large number of people could sit round the sides of the hollow. The sandy nature of the mound makes it uncertain whether the seat of the great man was in the centre or at one extremity of the hollow. The great mound is called in the immediate neighbourhood the "conygar," a name very

well known in many parts of England as meaning a rabbit warren. The first half of the word is obviously open to a larger meaning, the Coney Street in York meaning probably the King Street. There is another conygar in the neighbourhood of Midmar. On the Conyng Hillock at Inverurie, see page 122.

The Old Statistical Account, dating a few years before 1800, tells us (vol. ii. ch. 46, pages 516–526) that “all that part of Scotland which lies between Dee and Don was originally named Marr. The three divisions were Brae-marr, Cro-marr, and Mid-marr. The first name denoted the highest part, the second the lower and more cultivated, the third was probably due to its central position between the rivers, the church of Mid-marr being six miles from each of the rivers” Dee and Don. The account continues:—“There are three Druidical fanes in the parish. One of them, near the new church<sup>1</sup>, is remarkably large. There is also an artificial mount, of considerable magnitude, which is now a part of the glebe. This mount is obviously a work of art. A ditch or trench that is cast round it is now covered with grass. From the bottom of the trench to the summit the perpendicular height is about 30 feet. The acclivity is gentle at the entrance, but steep in every other part. The middle part of the summit contains a cavity, with a small circular rising in the centre. Here, tradition reports, criminals were tried and justice was administered.”

The presence of artificial or natural mounds of this character, in various parts of Caledonia in which stone circles are found, must tend to make us doubt whether the stone circle was really the universal place of community resort. A conspicuous mound, with the traditional name of a Seat of Justice, very near three prominent stone circles, tends to suggest that the circles there were not used as the seat of judicial proceedings, or had ceased to be so used. The Gaelic names for other mounds of this character tend in the same direction. Tom a' Mhòid is “the hill of the Court.” Another name is Cnoc na h-eireachd, “the hill of the Assembly.” These are local names in a district which has stone circles.

It does not appear probable that the same people set up at the same time both cnocs and circles. If they were not set up at the same time, the laws of evolution suggest that the separate judicial seat is later than the circle at which the *druì* had originally done justice among men as well as conducted the worship of the gods. Civil functions had in course of time been separated from ecclesiastical functions.

In a country comparatively bare of trees, as the parts of Caledonia now under consideration apparently were in early mediaeval times, these large erect stones would form a conspicuous mark. They were thus convenient meeting-

<sup>1</sup> The church thus described was built in 1787. The old church was inconvenient, the side walls being disproportionately low.

places, and they might serve as permanent definitions of the boundaries of property. There are many evidences of their uses for these purposes.

The Register of the Bishopric of Aberdeen records (vol. i. p. 80) that William de St Michael and others are cited in 1349 to appear at a Court to be held at the Standing Stones of Rayne in the Garioch, on a charge of usurping lands and rights of the Bishop. They were to meet there, in the full court of the Bishop, the King's Justiciar benorth the Forth, *ad unum diem legitimum per juris ordines ordinatum apud stantes lapides de Rane en le Garuiach*<sup>1</sup>.

The Register of Moray (p. 184) records that the Bishop of Moray and his attendants are summoned in 1380 to attend a temporal Court at the Standing Stones of Rait near Kingussie—*quod comparcant coram nobis apud le Standand Stanys de la Rathe de Kingucy*.

The great Register of the Priory of St Andrew's has been lost sight of for more than two centuries. It contained (Stuart, *Sculptured Stones*, vol. ii. p. xxvi) a charter of a gift to the Priory by King Malcolm (probably Canmore) of lands of Keig and Monymusk. One of the lines of march ran up to Standing Stones near a place with a long name meaning, the charter says, "the plain of sweet milk,"—*usque ad Stantes Petras juxta Albaclanenauch, quod Latine sonat campus dulcis lactis*; probably Achadh-learnacht, field of sweet milk. We return to this when we describe the circle of Auld Keig.

The Bass of Inverurie, Plate VI, much larger than the Midmar Seat of Justice, stands magnificently on a level plain, is a great feature in the Vale of Urie, and it too is called a Seat of Justice. Some one was wise enough, generations ago, to create a legend that if ever excavations were made on this remarkable Bass, the ancient family of Keith would come to an end. Excavations are not made. The Bass is safe. "Bass," by the way, is apparently not a Gaelic word. It seems to mean much the same as the word "boss," a knob. In some parts of Scotland, a foot-stool is called a "bass," but that may be due to the plaited matting with which it was covered.

While the Keith legend saves the Bass of Inverurie, an old song is supposed to prophesy its destruction,

When Dee and Don run both in one  
And Tweed shall run in Tay  
The bonnie water of Urie  
Shall bear the Bass away.

But to those who know the keen rivalries of Dee and Don, and Tweed and Tay, the oracle reads Never. There is another saying apposite to our purpose,

Ae fit o' Don's worth twa o' Dee  
Unless it be for fish or tree.

It seems to be so for "Druidical fanes."

<sup>1</sup> The proceedings are described under the head of Old Rayne, page 91.

Near the end of the eighteenth century, the old kirk of Midmar, near the Seat of Justice, was pulled down. From a very interesting connection of ideas, the builders of the new kirk deserted the curious hollow where their church had stood, and went up the rising ground to the spot where the original place of worship of their community had been, a large level space on which stood and still stands the Stone Circle of Midmar, with its great recumbent stone and tall flankers. They built the modern kirk between the circle and the road, leaving the circle untouched, and continuing to bury in the old kirk-yard. In 1914 they made a new burial ground round the new kirk. They removed the turf from the circle and laid the area in gravel. We are assured that they did not move any stone. The circle is complete on its south and east sides. Towards the west and north there are two stones still standing, leaving room for three stones, possibly for four to complete the number of twelve, including the recumbent stone.

That stone and its flankers are very fine. The recumbent stone is a little over 14 ft. long and is thick and massive, 4 ft. thick and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. high above ground. Mr Coles was informed that it weighs 9 tons 3 cwt., but its dimensions suggest more. The flankers are well over 8 ft. high, and more than that if they are measured from outside the circle; the other stones range from 7 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft., but the shortest stones are evidently mere dwarfed survivals. The larger stones are near the recumbent stone. Of course the levelling of the ground has removed all traces of banks and mounds, and probably has lessened not inconsiderably the height of some of the stones other than the flankers. Indeed, as has been said above, the flankers themselves shew higher from the non-levelled ground outside the circle. The recumbent stone faces, we calculated, about north-east. In a wood on the north side of the new kirk there is a tall pillar stone (with a dangerous list) on a mound, not visible from the circle or from the kirk yard, now that the intervening space is covered with fir trees. So far as our compass could help us to guess, it may have been the pointer stone for the due north. Sir Norman Lockyer makes the alignment solstitial, that is, north-east. Some remarks on the placing of the stones in this and other circles will be found at pages 42-44.

*The Circle near Castle Fraser, in Cluny parish.*

PLATE XI.

In this parish, as in so very many of the parishes, the Old Statistical Account tells us that not long before 1794 there had been little but open moor with rights of peat. Enclosures were only beginning. Mr Gordon of Cluny had recently enclosed several parts of his estate, and had set them to tenants. Miss Fraser, who had just succeeded to Castle Fraser, was carrying on

improvements with great spirit. She was to enclose and plant an extensive hill near her house, which, besides its usefulness, would be an ornament not only to Castle Fraser but to the whole country.

The two large castles in the district, Cluny and Castle Fraser, are described in the Account with considerable detail, both of the same curious form. They were built in the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The Account states that there are three Druidical temples in the parish of Cluny, and three pillars without inscription, one 10 ft. high and 5 ft. broad above the ground. There are also two other pillars, one of them 10 ft. high and one 8, standing near one another but without inscription. The parish is of considerable size, and we shall see all of its temples.

The circle which we may call Castle Fraser, in Cluny parish, is near a Lang Stane well known in the district, half a mile north of Craigearn. It stands  $11\frac{1}{2}$  ft. high. Near it, and near the west approach to Castle Fraser, are two fine monoliths. A quarter of a mile off is the remarkable mound on which stood—and still in main part stands—the circle with which we are dealing, with several of the small stones of an inner circle shewing clear among the fine crop of turnips occupying the site at our visit. Logan describes the circle as at Balgorkar, but the farm near by is West Mains. Mr Coles found that the old name of West Mains was Balgorkar, whence there was in his case some difficulty in finding the circle for which he was in search. "Castle Fraser" is the simplest identification.

Ten of the original stones, including the recumbent stone, are *in situ*, two of them lying on the ground at their proper place. Whether there were originally 12 in all, or only 11, we could not feel clear. Plate XI shews the back of the recumbent stone and flankers, the other face of the recumbent stone being hidden by loose stones piled up as they are picked up from the surface of the field.

The recumbent stone is most unusually square and smooth. It and its flankers cover about 15 ft. in length. Mr Coles puts its weight at 6 tons 5 cwt. The flankers, as also the other stones of the circle, stand on a ridge, the ground falling away behind them. Measured on the side which shews the most of them, they are between 8 and 9 ft. high. As usual, the tallest pillars—handsome stones—are nearest the recumbent stone and flankers. One of the stones that has fallen is over 8 ft. long, and is of special interest; its base is just like the base of the stones at Stonehenge, not finished off square, so that the stone could stand on a surface upright, but the base cut slanting, so that one edge of the stone goes down into the ground to a point, and is longer and goes deeper than the opposite edge. At Stonehenge, it has been found that one edge of a standing stone which fell had been 2 ft. 6 in. under the surface level and the other edge 4 ft. 6 in.



Remarks on the placing of the stones in this and the two preceding circles will be found at pages 42-44. The plan of each of the three will be found on Plate I. The two lines at angles  $15^{\circ}$  and  $19^{\circ}$  point to the two great monoliths mentioned above, which may have some connection with an approach to the circle.

Mr Logan's drawing of the Balgorkar circle is very clear. It is taken from a point outside the circle, shewing the curiously flat external face of the recumbent stone. It shews eight of the nine stones which he found remaining, with gaps for two more. "The altar," he says, is 6 ft. 9 in. long, and 4 ft. 6 in. high. The east flanker is 6 ft. 7 in. high. About two hundred paces eastward are two stones a few paces distant from one another, and about 7 ft. high. These have been mentioned above. They are seen on Mr Logan's plan, though the text says they are not.

Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of  $20^{\circ} 51'$  with the true north, and assigns a date of B.C. 570 if Arcturus was the star watched, or B.C. 1680 if Capella.

## CHAPTER VII

Petrology.—The shapes of stones.—Christian sites.—Malcolm Canmore's grants.—Confirmation by Hadrian IV.—Christian districts.—Ancient spellings.—Auquhorthies, Circle and Plan.—Loanhead of Daviot, Circle and Plan.—Newcraig, Daviot, Circle and cup-marked stone.—Kirkton of Bourtie, Circle.—South Ley Lodge, Circle.—Tomnagorn, Circle and Plan.—Taurobole.—*Penetralia*.—South Fornet, Circle.—Cothie Muir, Circle.—Keig Parish.—Auld Keig, Circle.—Stonehead, Circle.—Candle Hill Inch, Circle.—Inschfield, Circle.—Ardlair, Circle and excavations.—A May-year Circle.—Wanton Wells, Circle.—Rothiemay, Circle and cup-marked stone.—Auld Kirk o' Tough, Circle.—Whitehill, Circle.—Braehead of Leslie, recumbent stone.—Candle Hill Oyne, Circle, Plan, and excavations.—The Esthonians.

WE must now enter upon some description of the several circles which we include in our list.

Two general remarks must be made before we begin the task.

The first is an expression of regret for the ignorance of petrology which prevents our dealing with one of the most interesting and instructive features of the circles. We are convinced that a real knowledge of petrology would have served to enhance our conviction of the extreme care taken by our far off predecessors in the selection and the placing of the stones of their churches. Here and there we have been able to note the fact of special stones having been brought at great labour from considerable distances, though there were stones enough on the spot to serve a mere outward purpose. Incidentally, that obliges us to recognise a superior knowledge of petrology on their part. The modern visitor does not in most cases see any special differences of material in the several stones of a circle. The members of the village community knew all about it.

The second remark is also an expression of regret. Our comments on the circles would run to abnormal lengths if we dealt with the shapes of the stones and the positions held in circles by stones of special shapes. For instance, we have stones with natural pointed tops and we have stones with flat tops, the flat tops usually rare, quite possibly specially arranged for the confirmation of bargains by placing the hands or the symbol of the bargain on the top of the sacred stone. It was tempting to state the position of the flat-top stone or stones in some of the circles; but if it had been entered upon at all it ought to have been dealt with throughout. The more the shape of the stones or the shapelessness of the stones is considered, the more probable it seems that full knowledge of what the ancients knew would enable us to say at once,—this is a Scott Circle, this a Blomfield, this a Caroë, this a Comper. Of possible differences in the altar stones other than petrological, pagans as the people were, we might not speak so lightly.

We should bear in mind the fact that in many of the cases which will come before us here, we are dealing with very ancient Christian sites. Inasmuch

as considerable portions of our special district were the property of the Bishopric of Aberdeen, the Register of the Bishopric gives us a great deal of early information about them. Thus we learn that Malcolm Canmore, the husband of our Anglo-Saxon princess Margaret, gave to Bishop Beyn of Mortlach by a document tested at Forfare, October 8, 1068, the Church of Mortlach to be erected into an episcopal see, with its lands, and the churches of Cloveth and Dulmeth with their lands. His son David I gave to Nechtan bishop of Aberdeen by a document tested at Forfare, June 30, 1137, among other properties including half the water of North which is called Done, the church of Kyrkton, the shires and churches of Clat, Tulinestyn, Rane, Dauyot. His grandson Malcolm IV confirmed these gifts at Edinburgh, December 8, 1156. These three grants are the earliest recorded in the Aberdeen Register.

In the year following the latest of them, 1157, a sweeping confirmation of these grants, and of others of which no record is found in the Register, was given on the tenth of August, at Signia (Segni) by Pope Hadrian IV, who was our only English Pope, Nicholas Breakspeare. It was he who gave Ireland to King Henry II, asserting as his right to give it, that all islands belonged to St Peter, the same ground probably which entitled the Pope of the time of Columbus to make donation of all undiscovered lands in the sea up to a certain longitude. Among the possessions confirmed is the tithe of the dwellers between "the two waters which are called de and spe." The next document in the Register names those rivers Dee and Spee. To the churches already mentioned the Pope adds, among others, Oryn (Oyne).

The two kings make a distinction in their grants between Old Aberdon and Aberden. The Pope speaks of the church of Abberdein; the church of St Machorius; the vill of Old Abbirdone; the church of St Nicholas of Abbirdone; the tithe of the Burg Abbirdon; a vill next Abbirdon. The legend of St Machar tells us that he was sent by St Columba to go northwards on missionary work till he came to a river whose channel wound in the shape of a bishop's pastoral staff. There he was to establish himself. The course of the Don nearing the sea convinced him that the place was found, and near the mouth, Aber-Don, he settled.

In the Old Statistical Accounts, the Druids' Temples are not infrequently mentioned as three in number. We may probably understand that when Christianity had made sufficient way to encourage the Christians to map out the territory between "de and spe" into districts each with a place of Christian worship, they took three stone-circle communities as the normal district, in some cases taking two to constitute a district. It is conceivable that as a rule three was the normal number of ex-pagan communities which one Christian priest could work, possibly using as his meeting-places for worship the circles themselves. If that was so, we can well understand that the circles would not

be mis-handled; to ill-treat them, destroy them, or even leave them to decay, would be unwise on the part of the Christian priest, working among a country population not more than half converted from the ancient faith of all the generations, of which the Druid bards had sung the songs that the people had not forgotten, could not forget.

It may be helpful and of interest to give the names and the spellings of the parishes in the Deanery of the Garioch, the Deanery of Mar, and the Deanery of Aberdeen, nearly seven hundred years ago. Both in these lists and in the Echt charters it is curious to note how little the names have changed.

*Deanery of Garuiach*

Fyntre  
Kynkell  
Bowrty  
Inuerowry  
Dauiot  
Uchtyrlyss  
Forge  
Durnach  
Ovyn  
Prameth  
Culsamuelle  
Insula  
Lesly  
Rothmuriell  
Kynalchmond  
Clat  
Tulynestyn  
Rane

*Deanery of Aberden*

Balheluy  
Banchery deuenyk  
Cultyr  
Banchory tarni  
Dulmayok  
Echt

*Deanery of Marr*

Kyndrocht  
Kynmuk  
Crethy  
Obeyn  
Brass  
Kyncardyn  
Lumfanan  
Cluny  
Migmarre  
Kynnerny  
Tulich  
Keyge  
Afford  
Lochell  
Cuscheny  
Forbes  
Kyndrummy  
Taruelan Migveth  
Danachendor  
Murthelach  
Kynbethokis  
Invernochty  
Codylstane  
Cowle  
Kyern  
Munimousk  
Dunmet  
Cloueth  
Logy Ruthven  
Fethyner

*The Auquhorthies Circle.*

## PLATE XII.

This circle, on the estate of Fetternear, is one of the most complete of all the circles ; indeed it is probably the most complete. We owed our first knowledge of it to the Countess of Kintore, who guided us to it. We owe the plan to the kindness of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Proc.* xxxv. 227 : fig. 35.



Figure 2.

The place-name is variously spelled in modern as in ancient times. It was spelled Auquhorthies in 1696 ; Auchorty in 1528, Achquhorthy in 1391 ; presumably from the Gaelic *Achadh choirthe*, the field of the pillar stones.

The recumbent stone we measured as 12 feet long, 2 feet 3 inches thick, 4 feet 6 inches high at the back, outside the circle, and 5 feet high inside. It has two very prominent supporter stones, pointing inwards, each 5 feet long. Between them is a triangular stone level with the surface of the ground. Plate XII shews the stone and its supporters and its flankers from inside the circle. The flankers we measured as 7 feet 6 inches high. Another measurement makes them 7 feet and 8 feet high inside, 5 feet 10 inches and 6 feet 10 inches outside.

There are nine standing stones besides the two flankers, making the usual twelve with the recumbent stone. The distances between the centres of the stones, measured as chords not as circumference, we made, beginning with the west flanker and ending with the east flanker,  $21\frac{1}{2}$  feet,  $18\frac{1}{2}$ , 15,  $17\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $18\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $16\frac{3}{4}$ , 17,  $15\frac{3}{4}$ , 16, and 18. The diameter we made 60 feet. With such compass help as we had, the alignment of the recumbent stone appeared to be as usual, towards the north-east. But it should be remarked that we worked in a deluge of rain, and that the whole of the space enclosed by the stones was filled with a forest of whin bushes as high as our heads. Most unfortunately we had to leave before we could take the heights of the several standing stones. This was the more disappointing from the fact that the circle at Auquhorthies is unlike any other I have seen, so far as situation is concerned. The back of the recumbent stone is on level ground, but from that point the ground slopes sharply down, and the circle is carried level on the top of a great mound, resembling the seat of justice at old Midmar kirk. Like that mound also, the space included by the stones is hollowed out in the form of a shallow saucer. The stones are set on a raised ring of bank. By a very sad accident the house of Fetternear was burned out soon after we visited its ancient place of worship, and an appeal to the owner to clear away the whins would have been completely untimely. It might be less untimely now. Sir Norman Lockyer makes the circle solstitial.

*Loanhead, Daviot.*

PLATES XIII AND XIV.

We owe the plan to the kindness of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Proc.* xxxvi. 520: fig. 37.

This is a remarkable circle, in a cleared space in a wood behind the Manse of Daviot. The minister, Mr Anderson, is an excellent *cicerone*.

The recumbent stone is double, one stone standing behind the other with a narrow gap between them. The first impression given is of two separate stones, closely alike, not of one thick stone split into two, and such examination as we could give in most trying weather confirmed that impression. Mr Anderson, who knows the stones so well, took the other view, that it is one stone split in the course of time.

The effect of this double stone is so curious that I had a photograph taken of it from the end at which the flanker has fallen. The excellent photograph shows clearly a remarkable twin pair of stones, not one great stone split. This arrangement appears to confirm the importance attached by the builders to the retention of the stone we have called the recumbent stone in the position in which they originally placed it. Either of the two stones by itself would have been rather lacking in broad solidity.

The inner of the two recumbent stones is  $11\frac{1}{3}$  feet long and 4 feet high. The corresponding measurements of the outer are  $10\frac{1}{2}$  feet and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet.

The west flanker is broken off short, standing 3 feet high; its upper part lies on the ground behind it. The south flanker is lying down, 8 feet long.

Besides the recumbent stones and the flankers there are four stones of the circle standing and four lying down. We could only attend to the two standing stones next to the fallen flanker. The first, 19 feet from the flanker, is 6 feet 5 inches high, and  $12\frac{3}{4}$  feet in girth. The next is 18 feet off.

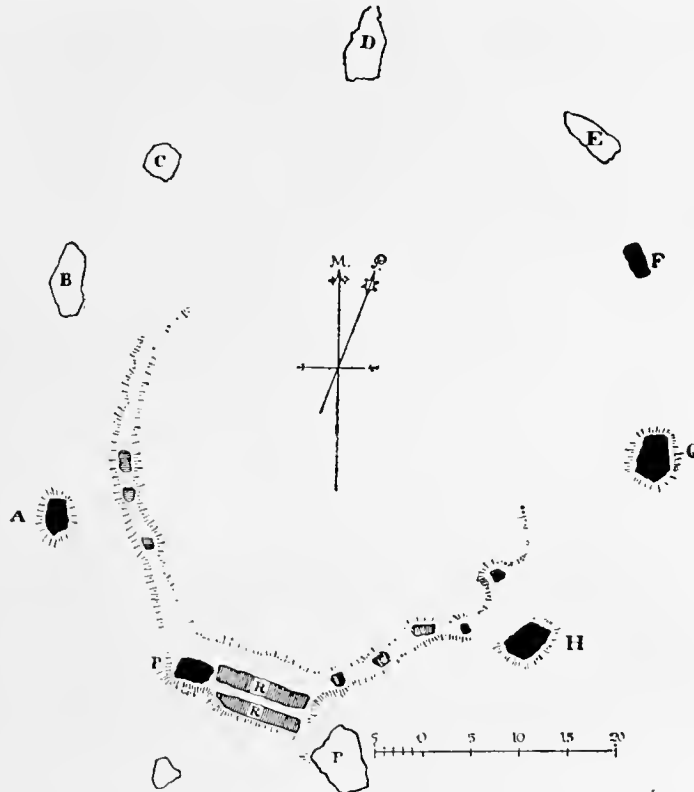


Figure 3.

The space enclosed by the stones is definitely saucer-like. Mr Anderson informed us that it had been dug over without results.

Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of only  $8^\circ$  with the true north, and assigns a date of B.C. 660, if Arcturus was the star watched, or B.C. 1580 if Capella.

Mr Ritchie, who holds that a close examination shews the double recumbent stone to be actually one stone split at some distant time into two, gives a good representation of the very fine stone, mitre-shaped, whose dimensions are given above. It stands, as has been said, next to the fallen flanker. On the inner face of this stone there are a dozen cup marks, from 2 inches to 1 inch

in diameter. They are curiously placed, 5 in an almost vertical row at the west side of the face with a sixth a little to the left at the top. Near the centre of the stone is the same arrangement of 5 stones and a sixth. Similar regularities of registering, if these cup markings are, as seems probable, the registers of the magician in charge, are noted at Balquhain.

*New Craig, Daviot.*

PLATES XV AND XVI.

The New Craig circle lies a mile north of the parish church of Daviot, near the Loanhead circle. The recumbent stone and flankers shew up well at the edge of a plantation. The fracture in the recumbent stone, and the broken character of its upper surface, are due to an attempt made many years ago by a mason to blast the stone for building purposes. Fortunately he was stopped before he proceeded further with this stone. Sir Norman Lockyer gives a date of B.C. 570 for Arcturus, B.C. 1680 for Capella.

In the plantation, 50 yards beyond the recumbent stone and 20 yards outside the circumference of the circle towards the east, lies the large boulder shown in Plate XVI. It has about a score of cup markings on its upper surface, some of them 3 inches in diameter, others faint and small and shallow. Mr Benzie chalked a number of the more marked cups, as his camera was nearly on a level with the surface on which they lie. Mr Ritchie reminds us that at Balquhain, some 4 miles off, we have another example of an outlying stone with cup marks.

*Kirkton of Bourtie.*

PLATE XVII.

These very fine stones are on the north side of the road which leads off to the right from the road from Inverurie to Old Meldrum. The stones are reached before you come to Bourtie. They are conspicuous, and quite near the road. We visited them in a terrible storm of wind and rain.

The recumbent stone is massive; 17 feet long and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet high outside,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet inside. The south flanker is well over 9 feet high and 10 to 12 feet in girth. Three large stones are collected at its base. There is no sign of the west flanker. Two stones of the circle remain to the west of its position. The first is 6 feet high and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet in girth. The second is a great squarish stone,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high and nearly 14 feet in girth.

Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of  $14^{\circ} 45'$  with the true north, and assigns a date of B.C. 770 if Arcturus was the star watched, or B.C. 1460 if Capella.



*South Ley Lodge.*

## PLATE XVIII.

This is a good example of a recumbent stone and two flankers, with no apparent sign of any other remains of the circle. It is very conspicuous, standing quite clear in a cultivated field very near a side road running west from the Waterton—Kintore road, on the north side of the road. As so often happens, the visitor cannot but feel grateful to the owner and the farmer that scrupulous care is taken not to disturb an ancient monument of which they may rightly be proud.

The solitary position of the monument makes it look distinctly fine, but its dimensions are not very considerable in comparison with some others. The recumbent stone is about 8 feet long, a little more on the north side and less on the south. It is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep above ground; in this case the bottom of the stone is not visible. It is 2 feet thick, and is split right through into slabs of 13 inches and 10 inches thick. The west flanker is over 5 feet high and 4 to 5 feet broad. The south flanker is nearly 6 feet high and 4 feet broad.

Without professing any real accuracy, the alignment appeared to be well north of north-east, not far off the then magnetic north. Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of  $14^{\circ} 15'$  with the true north, and assigns a date of B.C. 330 if Arcturus was the star watched, or B.C. 1940 if Capella.

There is a fine boulder at a farmstead to the north of this monument on a parallel road.

*Tomnagorn.*

## PLATE XIX.

We owe the plan to the kindness of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Proc.* xxxiv. 174: fig. 27. The magnetic deflection, not shewn on this plan, would be about  $10'$  greater than that shewn in figure 2, page 69.

The circle on the farm of Tomnagorn is described as lying between Torphins and Cluny, nearer Cluny than Torphins. That is rather vague. It can be reached from Dunecht by the Waterton—Ordhead road or by the road going west through Echt. By the Waterton road you turn south soon after passing the Ordhead Post Office and stop at the second farmhouse on the left side of the road, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the main road. The circle is a few yards inside the wood at the top of the field behind the farmhouse. Going west through Echt you turn up north very soon after passing the end of the road to Torphins, and a mile and a half brings you to Tomnagorn farm, five miles from Torphins Station.

The wood is fairly clear, and the effect of the great stones is striking. The recumbent stone is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, 6 feet high at the back, and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet thick. The south flanker is obelistic, but with a vertical edge towards the recumbent stone; it is nearly 7 feet high. The west flanker is down, and broken to pieces. Passing round the circle towards the east, from the south flanker, the first stone is 18 feet from the flanker; it is a massive squarish stone, nearly 7 feet high, 3 feet broad and 2 feet thick. The second stone is down; it is 7 feet

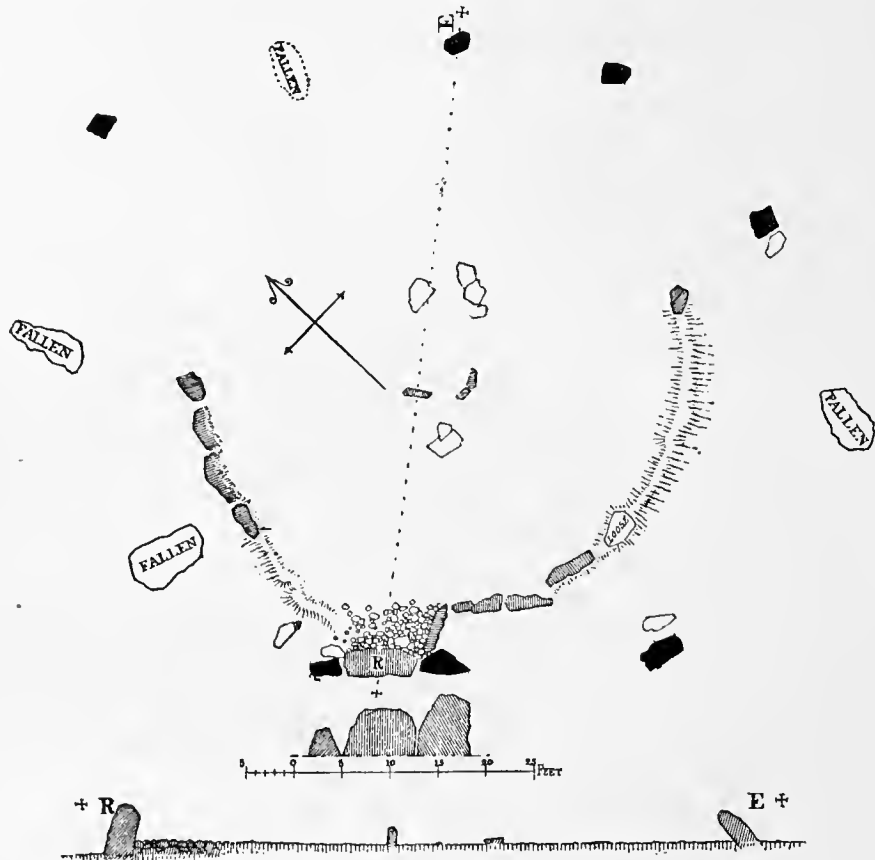


Figure 4.

long,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad at its broadest part (the shape is very irregular), and 2 feet thick. The third is 20 feet off; it is  $5\frac{1}{4}$  feet high,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad, 2 feet thick. The fourth is 18 feet off; it is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet high,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad, and from  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to 2 feet thick. The fifth is reclining,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, 2 feet 2 inches broad,  $2\frac{1}{3}$  feet thick. The sixth lies flat, covered with a layer of thick moss which we removed; it is a fine stone,  $6\frac{1}{3}$  feet long and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad, not thick. The seventh is 20 feet off; it is  $6\frac{1}{3}$  feet high and 2 feet square. The eighth is lying down, 18 feet off; it is 8 feet long, 3 feet 2 inches broad, tapering, 2 feet thick. The

ninth is down ; it is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet long and over 2 feet thick, tapering downwards ; it is 15 feet from the west flanker. Thus all the twelve stones of the circle are there, an unusual piece of good fortune.

The diameter is about 60 feet. There are many signs of an inner circle about 40 feet in diameter, built apparently of stones touching one another. In the middle is a smaller enclosure of flag stones in a small circle, three of the stones still *in situ*. In front of the south flanker is a narrow stone lying, five feet long. Evidently the circle deserves very careful planning.

Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of  $15^{\circ} 15'$  with the true north, and assigns a date of B.C. 390 if Arcturus was the star watched, or B.C. 1860 if Capella.

Opportunity may be taken from this very impressive circle for some remarks on the broad difference between a sacrificial stone and a slaughter stone. The sacrificial stone was the Druids' Altar. They offered there various votive and other offerings, and for a bloody sacrifice they smeared it with blood, as we saw from the Roman account of the proceedings at Anglesey in the first century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

If we allow a trained imagination to play upon the observed facts, we may regard it as probable that the human sacrifices were consummated at the innermost recesses. The slaughter stone would be a flat horizontal stone, probably with a drain or hollow below it. The Roman ceremony of the *taurobolium* may have a suggestion for us here. There are at the town of Die in Dauphiné, the Roman *Dea Vocontiorum*, memorials of several of these strange ceremonies<sup>2</sup>. A small cave was hollowed out beneath the surface of the ground, with a thin roof formed by the natural surface. In it a priest was placed in his full robes. A bull was sacrificed above-ground, immediately over the little cave, and the blood made its way through the roof of the cave and poured or dropped on to the priest. For a successful Taurobole, an abundant flow of blood on to the priest was desiderated. The inscriptions at Die record the name of the priest, of the dendrophore, of the provider of the victim, and of the emperor for whose safety this offering was made to their great goddess Cybele. The hollow under the central flagstone at Cothie Muir, and some of the medial features at Tomnagorn, and details at the Druids' Temple Farm, Inverness, may point to some distant kinship with this omen-bearing flow of blood from a sacrifice. We do not suggest any connection with the Mithraic bearing of the Taurobole. So great a ceremony must have been developed from small beginnings of which we may have signs here. On the other hand, these shallow saucers within the standing stones, sometimes completely paved with cobble stones, would naturally need a central drain.

<sup>1</sup> See pages 9, 13, 35.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Ice-caves of France and Switzerland*, Longmans 1865, page 217.

We may carry this connection of ideas further. At Tomnagorn there are stones in the middle set close together. At Druids' Temple Farm, Inverness, this principle is applied on a large scale, with massive stones, for the actual circle itself, as will be seen on Plates XXXVII and XXXVIII. But within the close circle of great stones with its formal openings here and there, there are similar stones, large but not so large, which have evidently been set in order. They are now in such disorder that the form of the area which they once enclosed cannot be determined, but apparently it was rather winding than circular. Great force must have been applied to create this disorder. It seems natural to suppose that here were the *penetralia* of the most inhuman stages of the worship at the stones, and that the revolution which terminated that stage violently destroyed the memorials of it. No such violence has been applied to the circle itself. A similar impression is given by the appearance of a devastated circle with the same features in Dores parish, on the left side of the road from Inverness.

### *The South Fornet Stones.*

#### PLATE XX.

This fine pair of flankers are in Skene parish, about two miles north of the Loch. The recumbent stone has disappeared; the space left for it between the flankers is  $6\frac{2}{3}$  feet. The west flanker is 6 feet 10 inches above ground; the other,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Five other stones of the circle are lying where they have fallen, only one of them up to 5 feet in length.

### *The Circles in Keig Parish.*

#### PLATES XXI, XXII, XXXIII.

We come now to two remarkable circles. The Old Statistical Account gives a clear description of the County of Alford in which they lie.

This county is surrounded by hills and mountains, and there is no entrance to it but by ascending considerable heights to gain the hollow passes between them. It comprehends the parish of Alford and four other parishes, Forbes, Keig, Gillynessle, and Tough.

In this general statement the Account does not deal with parochial antiquities. It makes no mention of Druids' Temples. It records a tradition of Alford Parish in these words,—“Many of the parishioners report, though without much credibility, that Gregory the Great was buried in the parish.” There is no doubt some curious and interesting explanation of this, which it might be possible to recover. We know the contemptuous scorn with which Scotie ecclesiastics treated Augustine and his companions who represented

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*Dunecht Antiquities*, page 76.

The explanation of the tradition that Gregory the Great was buried at Alford is simple. Cyric or Grig, the rival and destroyer of king Aed of the Newton Stone who was buried at Inverurie in 878, was a great patron of the Scottish Church. The Scottish monks latinised his name into Gregorius, and called him Magnus. Dunnideer and Inverurie were his strongholds, and he may well have been buried at Alford.



Gregory the Great in the south of England; but Bishop Dagan, the typical example, was Hibernian, not of Caledonian Pictland.

The Reverend Alexander Low, the minister of Keig, found on his arrival in 1793 that the Statistical Account had been drawn up by Major Youngson, Harthill. The old spellings were Kege, Keyge, Kegge.

The Account states that there are many Druidical Circles in the parish, and enters into detail with regard to two of them, now known as the Cothie Muir Circle and the Auld Keig Circle, otherwise called the Auld Kirk o' Keig. It further states that the rude upright stones were representations of Celtic deities, and were the first description of images in the world.

To take first the Cothie Muir Circle, the recumbent stone and flankers of which are shown in Plate XXI, the circle itself being shewn in Plate XXXIII. The Account states that it stands in a wood on the Cothiemuir hill—the wood is now cut down—within the grounds of Castle Forbes and about half a mile north of it. It seemed to have had originally 11 upright stones, mostly about 7 feet high, and, except on the south side, 15 feet apart, on a circle 25 yards in diameter. The two stones towards the south were pyramidal,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, 3 feet broad, 20 inches thick at base. They were only 15 feet apart, the space between them being occupied by a horizontal sub-cylindrical mass of stone upwards of 5 feet in diameter and  $13\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, lying on the west side of the circle. The flankers and 3 other stones were standing, 2 were lying down, 4 were broken.

We may now turn to our own description of what we saw and measured. It will not be necessary to call attention to each case of differences of measurements. On the face of it, one might suppose that it would be easy to be quite accurate; but a little experience shews that the curiously irregular shape of many of the stones renders them difficult of measurement. And when the wind is so strong that you cannot stretch the tape straight, and the rain is so heavy that it pulps such of your notes as the wind has not carried off, you begin to feel diffident of successful accuracy.

This has been a remarkably fine circle. The loss of four of its stones and the fall of another have not availed to deprive it of grandeur. It is about two miles east from the modern Kirk of Keig, on the road to Tilliefour. The tops of the stones can be seen from the road, in an open space on the left side of the road, three or four hundred yards away. It appears to be not infrequently confused with another remarkable monument of this character at Auld Keig, to the west of the modern Kirk of Keig. The description of this second circle comes next in our series.

The recumbent stone must be described as magnificent. We made it 13 feet 3 inches long and 5 feet 4 inches thick. It is a great round stone, measuring saddle-wise from the ground at the back to the ground at the front

very nearly 12 feet. The south flanker is 9 feet 3 inches high, very square, 7 feet round at top, 7 feet 8 inches at bottom. The west flanker is 8 feet 3 inches high, pyramidal, 10 feet round a foot from the bottom; at one side it is 9 feet high.

On the east side of the circle only the first stone remains standing. It is the stone nearest to the south flanker,  $20\frac{1}{2}$  feet distant, 5 feet 4 inches high.

On the west side of the circle the first three stones remain, two of them standing. The first is 22 feet from the west flanker, and 6 feet high. The second is 16 feet from the first; and the third, which has fallen, is 14 feet from the second. A stone remains nearly opposite the recumbent stone, about 30 feet in a straight line from the fallen stone last mentioned; the intermediate stone has disappeared.

There is a great flat stone lying towards the middle of the circle, about 3 feet 4 inches by 4 feet, its centre being 24 feet from the recumbent stone and 33 feet from the opposite stone. It seems to be the cover of a hollow space and has apparently slipped off its props, which were not large stones. The Account mentions this flat stone in its description of Auld Keig Circle. It describes it as a flat slab near the centre of the circle, 4 or 5 feet square, covering a small pit open at the south side.

The corrected compass appeared to point clear north of north-east. Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of  $18^{\circ} 55'$  with the true north, and assigns a date B.C. 920 if Arcturus was the star watched, or B.C. 1300 if Capella.

We come now to the Auld Keig Circle, Plate XXII. The Account states that this circle is more imperfect than the Cothiemuir circle, a statement which is still correct. Major Youngson describes it as lying a quarter of a mile north-east of the farmsteading of Old Keig.

It was 66 feet in diameter. There were two upright stones 9 feet high and an immense stone between them 16 feet long, 6 feet high, 5 feet broad at one end. One of the upright stones differed from the other in being flat at the top, of quadrangular form, and on the south side of the circle.

The Account concludes with a reference to Tacitus, *De moribus Germanorum*, c. ix, to the effect that it was unlawful for the Germans to worship the gods within walls or under a roof.

We can now turn to our own visit to Auld Keig.

This again must be described as a noble example, so far as the main feature of our investigation is concerned. It lies west of the modern Kirk of Keig. The road to it passes the modern Kirk of Old Keig, and leads to Mortimer's Farm, the second farmhouse beyond Old Keig Kirk. The circle lies on the horizon at the back of the farmhouse, across a long rising grass field.

There are many curious points connected with this circle, which is about 70 feet in diameter. Careful planning might not improbably find a circle within



a circle, and possibly an exterior circle of large stones. For our present purpose it must suffice to state the dimensions of the main stones still *in situ*.

The recumbent stone is 16 feet long, 4 feet 9 inches high, and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad. A large piece has been broken off the stone on its inner face near the west flanker. The south flanker is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet high measured at its south edge,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad, 1 foot 9 inches thick. The west flanker is 5 feet 8 inches high, 2 feet 9 inches broad, 2 feet 3 inches thick. Twenty feet from the south flanker there is a standing stone  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet high and 10 feet 8 inches in girth.

The stones stand and lie about in a small wood, in a very confused manner.

The compass appeared to point unusually far away from the north. Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of  $29^{\circ} 15'$  with the true north, and assigns a date of B.C. 430 if Arcturus was the star watched, or B.C. 1820 if Capella.

Mr James Logan visited this circle and described it in the letter already quoted. He found "a sacrificial stone," two supporter stones, and one stone adjacent to the east. The "altar" was 14 feet long, 5 feet 4 inches broad, 4 feet 8 inches high on the outside. The flankers were 6 feet and 5 feet high,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  broad at base. These measurements differ much from ours. Before we saw the circle we had been told by a friend who had photographed most of the circles that we were about to see by far the largest of the recumbent stones here.

The Great Register of the Priory of St Andrews, which has been lost sight of for two and a half centuries, contained a charter of gift to the Priory by King Malcolm, probably Canmore, of lands in Keig and Monymusk. One of the lines of boundary ran *usque ad Stantes Petras juxta Albaclanenauch quod Latine sonat campus dulcis lactis*, "up to the standing stones near Albaclanenauch which means the field of sweet milk." The gaelic for "field of sweet milk" is Achadh-leamhnacht, and that is probably what is meant by Albaclanenauch. We know how the Domesday Surveyors misunderstood and mis-spelled the local names as reported to them by Saxons and Angles.

"Field of sweet milk" is a good name for the pleasant grassy slope up which we pass to the Old Keig Circle from the farmstead lying below, with its byres for the cows that still feed on that field. The site of the other of the Keig circles, at Cothie Muir, is not so well suited to that description.

We have in the Aberdeen Register an interesting reference to this Aberdeenshire property of the Priory of St Andrews; or rather of the Archbishop, as would appear. In the accounts of the Rental of the Bishopric of Aberdeen for the year 1511<sup>1</sup> we find a memorandum to the effect that "the episcopal see of St Andrews being vacant the bishop of Aberdeen received the second tithes from the lands of the bishop of St Andrews within the diocese of Aberdeen during the period of the vacancy." Gavin Dunbar, the successor of bishop William, received the tithe for two years from the lands of Kege and Monemusk.

<sup>1</sup> Register i. 359.

*Stonehead.*

## PLATE XXIII.

This interesting group of recumbent stone and flankers stands some 700 feet above the sea, in connection with the many remains which mark the importance of the position of Dunnideer. The stones are set on a circular mound, which makes their inner and outer sides differ considerably in height. Our view is taken from within the circle; that is, the right hand flanker is towards the west. The heights of the flankers on the far side are about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The recumbent stone is over 13 feet long. It is unusually thin, and on the outside it is about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inside.

*Candle Hill Insch.*

## PLATE XXIV.

The account of this prostrate circle, given in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1902<sup>1</sup>, notes the remarkable fact to which reference has already been made, that in this central portion of the northern division of Aberdeenshire there are at least four sites bearing the name Candle Hill, each with a stone circle, the Candle Hill at Old Rayne, at Hatton of Ardoyne, at Insch, and at Ellon. We shall see under Ellon that the reference to a Candle Hill is a misunderstanding, and that the name Candle there has a quaint explanation. At page 26 we have dealt with the true meaning of the word Candle.

All the stones of this circle are down except the north-east stone. It shews square in the photograph, and it is in fact about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet square. It will be seen that there is a distinctly marked cairn in the middle of the circle. The photograph shows cleverly in the foreground the recumbent stone and the flankers, whose dimensions are given as follows:—east pillar  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet, west pillar 9 feet, recumbent stone  $13\frac{3}{4}$  feet long,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  broad, 22 inches thick.

We may note here the frequency of 22 inches and 2 feet in the measure of the thickness of the stones, both recumbent and standing.

*Inschfield, Nether Boddam.*

## PLATE XXV.

These stones shew well on the high ground to the left, shortly after passing through Insch on the way to the farm of Nether Boddam. Three stones in all remain, the recumbent stone, the southern flanker, and a stone on the N.N.W.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. xxxvi. 540.

of the circle, whose diameter has been about 90 feet. The flanker is a fine up-standing stone, over 10 feet high on its highest side. The Plate shews that it stands on a large base. It is probably due to the slope of the ground that it looks as if it had sunk down on its west side. The recumbent stone looks as if it had fallen over towards the spectator, but it is in fact leaning far over the other way. It is split near the middle. Its dimensions are  $13\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, 7 feet broad, and over 2 feet thick. The one other remaining stone is nearly 5 feet high, at a part of the circle where the smaller stones usually begin. Thus all seems to point to this having been one of the finer circles.

*Ardlair.*

## PLATE XXVI.

In connection with the circle at Sin Hinny, we gave an account of excavations carefully made there some 60 to 70 years ago. Excavations were made at the same time and under the same careful superintendence at two others of the circles in the region with which we are dealing. One of these is at Ardlair, the other at Hatton of Ardoyne, Plate XXX. Colonel Forbes Leslie gives a drawing of the recumbent stone and flankers at Ardlair (ii. 216). The two flankers are specially prominent features in the case of this circle, by reason of their apparent isolation, due probably to the disintegration of the recumbent stone, out of which, as we shall see, some controversy has arisen. The report on excavations at Ardlair is as follows.

*Circle at Ardlair, Parish of Kennethmont, Stuart* I. xxii.

This circle stands on the top of a round low hill, now covered with wood, from which, before the ground was planted, a fine view must have been obtained in all directions. It seems to have consisted originally of ten stones, of from four to five and a half feet in height. On the south-west corner is a recumbent stone, about nine feet in length, between two upright pillars. There is a low circular vallum of earth and stones within the circle of stones, probably formed from the soil of the interior of the circle, the level of which is lower than that of the ground outside. This inner circle is not in the centre of the outer one, but is nearer to the south than the north side of the circle. Two stones, each about three feet long, parallel to each other, about three feet apart, at right angles to the great recumbent stone, lie immediately in front of it, their ends touching the inner vallum. Nothing was found in this circle, excepting at a spot on the side of the inner circle, where, about a foot below the surface, were two flat stones, each three feet in length and one foot in breadth, laid together lengthwise, with their edges touching, like the ridge of a house. These two stones were of a kind called "Coreen Stone," and must have been brought from the Hill of Coreen, about six miles distant. Beneath was a pit, four feet in diameter, and upwards of two feet in depth, about a foot into the subsoil, in which, among the few stones and light open yellow loam with which it was filled nearly to the top, where the mould became black, was found a small quantity of

incinerated bones, with the usual deposit of black burnt mould and charcoal. The stones were not marked by fire, nor were there any traces of urns. The soil was of a sort ill adapted for preserving animal remains.

About twelve yards north-west of the circle is a mound, composed of earth and stones mixed. It is thirty feet in length, ten feet in breadth, and little more than a foot in height above the adjoining surface. In the centre of this cairn, and placed lengthways in it, we found a hole upwards of six feet in length, about three feet in width, and two and a half feet in depth, filled with very rich black loam, mixed with many stones of all sizes, some of them marked by fire. Small quantities of the usual burnt black mould were also found. At the north end of this hole was a large stone, about five feet long, laid across, forming the end of the hole at the surface, while below this stone it was built in with smaller stones.

The two props of the recumbent stone may be compared with the two on a larger scale at Auquhorthies, Plate XII. We may repeat the note of importance which these stones give to the maintenance of the original position of the recumbent stone.

The circle at Ardlair is entitled to special consideration on account of its alignment. The recumbent stone is in the south-east quadrant. The magician would thus watch the north-west horizon. He would mark the setting of a circumpolar star, and we can understand that for the purposes of a night clock the time of the setting was of importance.

The only other exception to the south-west position of the recumbent stone, known to Sir Norman Lockyer, was at Old Bourtree Bush, where the recumbent stone faces due east, "to define the place of the equinoctial sunsets," Sir Norman explains, without giving reason for the special importance of defining that place.

Sir Norman believed that he found a May-year avenue at Ardlair, whence the circle might once have been a May-year one. He came to the conclusion that the recumbent stone originally faced the May sunrise, was then subjected to the action of fire, and after being to some extent shattered by fire was laid between two of the stones of the circle—not, we understand him to mean, placed as flankers—in such a position that its axis pointed to the May sunrise; all this being the act of the solstitial priests. Why the solstitial priests should upset their predecessors' May-year circle, and without setting up a recumbent stone with solstitial alignment should very carefully re-lay the old recumbent stone—made to pass through the fire before displacement—so that its axis pointed to the May sunrise of the old and abandoned dispensation, is not explained. It appears that the axis of the stone does so point, its azimuth being  $N. 61^{\circ} 15' E.$  while the azimuth of the May sunrise with hills  $2^{\circ}$  high is  $N. 61^{\circ} 30' E.$

All this was a heavy call upon the intelligence or imagination of the reader. Sir Norman was promptly faced with a declaration that the solstitial priests

must have cracked and shattered the stone since Colonel Forbes Leslie published his two volumes on the *Early Races* with a drawing of the recumbent stone shewing it as a shapely and smooth stone. Sir Norman replied by publishing a photograph of Colonel Forbes Leslie's drawing, shewing it cracked and splintered. There so far as appears the controversy ended.

On Plate IV a pen-and-ink sketch from Colonel Forbes Leslie's drawing will be found. It is so far correct, that the drawing shews a great crack right through the middle, exactly as our Plate XXVI shews it. As it now stands, the part of the stone which rested upon the supporting left-hand prop, shewn by Colonel Forbes Leslie, no longer appears.

No doubt the flankers do not look like flankers of usual type. They are more like ordinary stones of a large-stone circle. But at Tomnagorn and Auld Keig and elsewhere we have flankers not very normal.

### *The Wanton Wells Circle.*

#### PLATE XXVII.

The recumbent stone and one flanker, which alone represent this circle, are very prominent objects on the right hand side of the road from Inch towards Leslie Castle, a short way beyond Wanton Wells Farm. We found it standing boldly out from a fine field of corn, and we could not get within some 30 yards of it. The measurements here given are recorded by Mr Coles. The south flanker is almost lozenge-shaped, 9 feet high, 17 feet girth at middle, 13 feet girth at base. The recumbent stone is in the main 10 feet long, part of it stretches to 11 feet extreme measure, 6 feet 9 inches extreme height. Its weight is computed to be nearly 14 tons. Unlike so many of the recumbent stones it seems to have been set firm in the ground.

### *The Rothiemay Circle.*

#### PLATE XXVIII.

Our Plate shews a very pretty circle, nearly three miles north-east from the Rothiemay station. Only five stones remain in the circle; two others are deposited near the gate. A measurement of the vacant spaces shews that there were originally twelve stones. The two flankers are among the five that have been destroyed. It is on record that seventy or eighty years ago the grieve at the home farm of Rothiemay House began to remove them, and had got five of them away and presumably broken up before he was stopped. The recumbent stone is the great square stone on the extreme left of the picture. It is 14 feet long, 4 thick, and 5 high, and a large part of the whole area of

70 square feet is thickly covered with the cup marks which shew so clearly on our reproduction of Mr Ritchie's admirable photograph. The public does not realise the pains that are taken to produce such a photograph of cup marks as this. The stone faces the north-east and is therefore in shadow when the ordinary visitor sees it and the shallower cups are scarcely visible. Mr Ritchie left home in the evening and spent the later part of the night by the stone, waiting to photograph it shortly after sunrise on a bright midsummer morning when every cup was visible. The use of a magnifying glass has the natural ill result of exaggerating the texture of the paper but in this case that detriment does not matter much. The general impression is of horizontal strata of cups. Mr Ritchie counts 107 cups, some of them having rings and half rings round them. Unfortunately the stone shews signs of splitting, especially at the easterly end, the left of the picture. We shall have much to say of this stone in Chapter XIII, where we shew, or attempt to shew, that it does in fact represent a collection of constellations, with rings round some of the most marked stars, to which cups much larger than the ordinary run of cups are given. It will be seen that there are two of these large cups at the bottom of the stone, one at least of them a good deal damaged by breakage or wear. Unless we are much mistaken, the Rothiemay Stone will prove to be a turning point.

*Auld Kirk o' Tough Circle.*

PLATE XXIX.

The slight remains of this circle are not easy of access. The point to make for is the Post Office at Comers of Midmar.

The plan is shewn in Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot. vol. xxxiv. 172 : fig. 26.

The recumbent stone is shewn in our Plate. It is the stone on the left hand. The second stone shewn is the only other stone remaining in the south-west quadrant. The alignment of the recumbent stone was due magnetic north in 1900.

Three of the stones are *in situ* at the west, four at the north, three at the east. The circle when complete was formed of a large number of small stones. It lies, as do seven or eight others, on the north side of the Hill of Fare.

*The Whitehill Circle, Monymusk.*

PLATE XXIX.

This has been a remarkable circle with curious arrangements. In the time of Mr John Stuart it had much more to tell us than it has now, especially at the part which in our judgment held the *penetralia* of worship, the centre of

the circle. There was in 1853 a low rampart of stones, guarded by large flat stones set endwise, and enclosing an open space 9 feet in diameter forming the centre of the circle, hollowed out and free from stones of any kind. This is a helpful fact.

The west flanker remains standing,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  feet high outside. The east flanker is down,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet long. The recumbent stone is put at over 7 tons. Other stones are large,  $5\frac{1}{2}$ , 6, and nearly 8 feet high.

*Braehead of Leslie.*

## PLATE XXX.

Only the recumbent stone of this circle remains.

It is a fine stone, 11 feet long, 6 feet high, 3 feet thick, weighing some 12 tons or more.

Sir Norman Lockyer assigns to it the earliest or the latest date of all; 2000 B.C. if it was placed to face the rising of Capella, 250 B.C. if Arcturus was its star.

The Old Statistical Account says of the parish of Lesly, "the remains of two Druid temples still appear, neither of them very entire."

Mr Ritchie fears that this fine stone is likely to split into two, as, in his opinion, the great stone at Loanhead of Daviot has done.

*Hatton of Ardoyne on the Candle Hill, Oyne.*

## PLATE XXX.

We owe our plan to the kindness of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Proc.* xxxv. 242: fig. 47.

This has been one of the most important circles. It had originally twelve stones, of which seven remain, two of the seven down. The recumbent stone is remarkably thin and high in comparison with its length, 8 feet long,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, 15 inches thick. The western flanker is 7 feet high inside, 8 feet 5 inches outside. The other flanker is gone. The heights of the other stones are 6 to 4 feet. The Old Statistical Account tells us that "the only antiquities in this district are two Druidical temples," and that Oyne is usually pronounced Een.

An interesting account of this double or treble circle and its arrangements and its excavation, is appended. The great labour undertaken in transport of the recumbent stone and its flankers should be carefully noted.

*Circle on the heights of Ardoyne, Aberdeenshire, Stuart 1. xxii.*

This circle is on the south side of the nearly level summit of a ridge called "The Currachs of Ardoyne," in the parish of Oyne, which forms, for about a mile, the northern boundary of the valley of the Gadie; the southern verge being formed by the range of Bennachie. The circle formerly consisted of twelve stones, but seven only now remain. On the south side was a recumbent stone, about eight feet long, five and a half broad, and fifteen inches in thickness, between two upright pillars. These three stones were of Bennachie granite, and the labour required to transport them across the valley to the

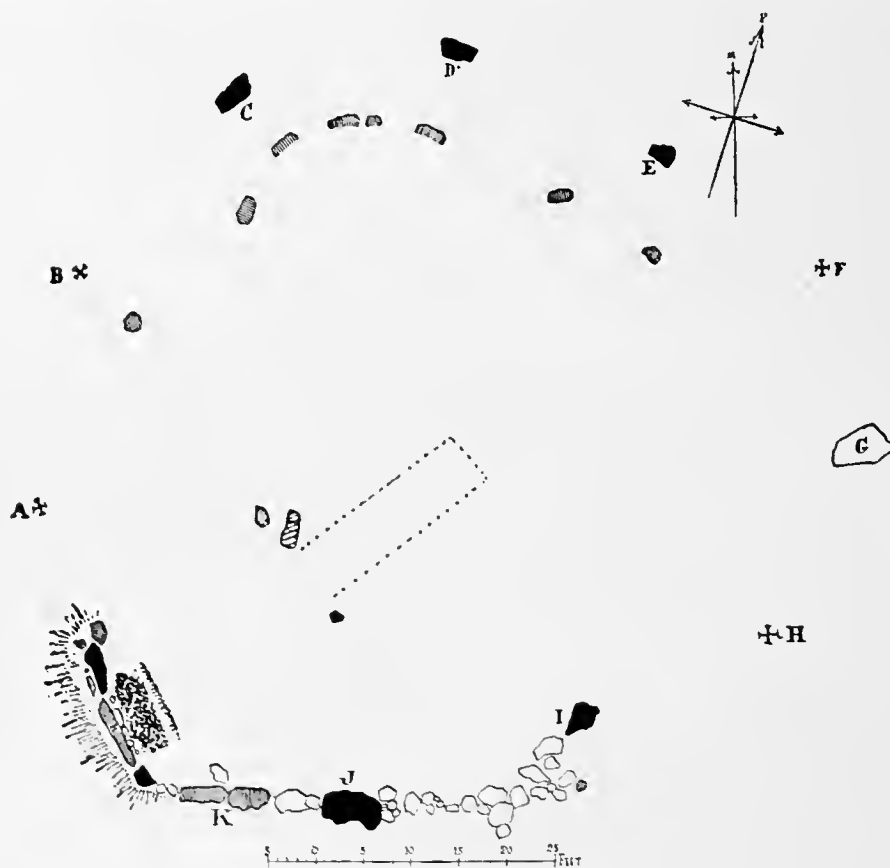


Figure 5.

top of the opposite hill must have been great. Only one of the upright pillars now remains, the other having been thrown down and broken; but all the remaining stones are of gneiss, of the kind common to the country, and were probably quarried out of a rocky summit, about fifty yards from their present position.

On being carefully examined, it was found that this circle contained two concentric circles within it, raised one above the other like steps. The outer one was about a foot above the surface of the ground exterior to it, and the inmost circle was raised above it again, but not quite so much, although, from the lapse of time, and the removal of many of the stones which marked these inner circumferences, the original level of the



interior one was not so distinctly defined as the outer, the boundary stones of which were a good deal larger. The latter was found to be faced all round with stones, having the outer sides, in most cases, flat, and most of them rising several inches above the surface, some of them about eighteen inches or more, while they extended two feet underground. The stones round the edge of the inner circle were much smaller, and not so deeply sunk in the ground. The diameter of the whole circle was eighty-one feet, of the first interior circle sixty-nine feet, and of the inmost sixty-four feet. The only remains found were a grave in the centre, which measured five and a half feet in length, one foot nine inches in breadth, and four feet in depth. It was paved in the bottom with small boulders, on which lay a small quantity of incinerated bones.

The earth, for about half the depth, was black loam, and underneath was the same sort of yellow light loam found at the grave of the Piccardy stone and in the circle at Ardlair, the subsoil being very close and hard. At each end of the grave were found small fragments of an urn, burnt very red; and the grave was filled in with earth, covered with another layer of small boulders, above which was the surface soil and vegetation. The grave lay north-east and south-west; and about four feet from the north-east end were found small fragments of another urn, similar in character to those in the grave. Nothing was found near any of the stones, except at the centre one on the north, where a kind of grave, six feet long, four wide, and two and a half deep, extended inwards, from the foot of the standing stone to that of the smaller stones opposite, and in which was a considerable quantity of black burnt stuff and charcoal, mixed with yellow clayey earth, and containing some stones marked with fire.

At the other side of the summit, anciently called Knockmorgan, and south-east from the circle about a third of a mile, stands a large monolith, about nine feet high. On digging about it nothing was found, nor did the ground appear ever to have been disturbed.

Sir Norman Lockyer takes this circle to be a May-year circle, Berry Brae (Lonmay) being the only other circle measured by him whose alignment entitles him to call it a May-year circle. The azimuth at Ardoyne he gives as  $N. 57^{\circ} 15' E.$ , at Berry Brae  $N. 61^{\circ} 15' E.$  At Ardlair the length of the recumbent stone points very near to the alignment at Berry Brae,  $N. 61^{\circ} 45' E.$

Stuart's remark in the above account of this circle at Ardoyne, that the recumbent stone and flankers are of Bennachie granite and must have been transported with great labour across the valley to the top of the opposite hill, while the remaining stones are of the local gneiss, is quite in accord with experience in other circles. Regret has been expressed in the Preface for ignorance of petrology; but time after time it has been quite clear that the recumbent stone is unlike the other stones and must have been brought from a distance. The customary impression is that the recumbent stone is on this account as well as in dimensions unique among its companions. In the present case the flankers share with the stone they guard the uniqueness of petrology. The more we study the details of the work of the Pictish Druids, the more surprised we are to find by degrees how much they knew and on what careful principles they acted.

We have given three long descriptions of excavations on the sites of our stone circles, those namely at Sin Hinny, Ardlair, and Hatton of Ardoyne. One point has no doubt caught the attention of the reader, for it is of primary importance; it is, the small amount of incinerated bones found in the course of the excavations, and the absence of reference to human bones. It seems worth while to quote in this connection a few words from the information which the northman Ohthere gave to our King Alfred, taken from my book on King Alfred's Books, page 92. The Esthonians—the east men, of whom we have heard so much in the recent cataclysm in Russia, are being described to King Alfred by the voyager Ohthere :—

It is a custom with the Esthonians, that there men of every tribe must be burned; and if any one find a single bone unburned, they shall make a great atonement.

## CHAPTER VIII

Dyce, Circle.—Strichen, Circle.—Old Rayne, Circle.—An early lawsuit.—Balquhain, Circle, obelisk, cup-marks.—Louden Wood, Circle.—Aikey Brae, Circle.—Culsalmond, Circle.—Backhill, Circle.—The Devil's Ninepins.—The Clava Circles, Nairn.—The Druids' Temple Farm Circle, Inverness.—The Cullaird Circle, Torbreck.

### *The Dyce Circle.*

#### PLATES XXXI AND XXXII.

ABOUT two miles from the railway station of Dyce Junction, a few miles out of Aberdeen, is the Standing Stones Farm on the hill of Tyrebagger, a word probably meaning the land of acorns (*bachar*). The granite from the quarries at Tyrebagger was used for the Bell-rock Lighthouse, the Sheerness Quay, the Deptford Quay, the West India Docks, the London Custom House, New London Bridge, and many a great work since that list was made out in 1840 for the New Statistical Account.

The New Statistical Account proceeds to state that on a gentle declivity on the south side of Tyrebagger is a Druidical temple of ten rough stones in a circle, the highest 10 feet the lowest 5 feet. One stone, facing due south, is of much greater breadth and depth than the others.

Our Plates shew this great stone and its flankers, and the best view that can be got of the whole circle, all but the heads of the stones being unfortunately cut off by a stone wall. The upper parts of the four stones on the right hand (west) can be seen, and on the left hand (east) the tops of two, the wall hiding the curious little stones which complete the circle.

It has been a noble circle. Some of the stones are of unusual height, and they shew up well, standing on a raised bank. The flanking pillars are  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet and 11 feet high. The tallest stones are towards the west, following the 11 feet flanker,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  feet, 7 feet, and 5 feet high. The stones next the  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet flanker are  $7\frac{1}{3}$  feet and 5 feet. The four intermediate stones vary from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet to 3 feet in height. We should here again note the recurrence of the lowest stones towards the north and east, as though there were special reasons for not obscuring the clearness of the view in that direction.

The recumbent stone is immense. Its weight is put at nearly 24 tons. It is unlike all the other stones of the circle, being of darkish grey granite. Seen from outside the circle it is a vast stone, lying quite clear of both flankers. But seen in profile it is a vast slab leaning forward towards the centre of the circle, at a sharp acute angle with the surface of the ground, apparently propped to a certain extent by stones lying in front of it. The nearest stone west has

a decided lean outwards, and being unusually tall it seems to be in a dangerous condition. We may well wonder how small village communities could move and adjust such huge masses as we find in one recumbent stone after another, in many cases not stones of the district. The conditions affecting the erection of Stonehenge were very different; whatever science the ancient world possessed was in full force there, and it was probably the climax of the stone-builders' art, later in time and more developed in method than the little village-community circles we are considering.

### *Strichen.*

#### PLATE XXXI.

The Strichen Stones are just outside the parish of Old Deer. They are of grey granite, unlike all the others noted in Old Deer, which are of whinstone or highly crystallised gneiss.

The recumbent stone is only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick, thinner than any other in the group. There is this peculiarity, that it and its flankers are at the north of the circle instead of the south. No other dimensions are given.

The reason for the absence of further information is conclusive. Long ago, early in last century, the stones of the circle were removed. The proprietor, Lord Lovat, ordered them to be replaced. The order was carried out without regard to the original position of the stones, as is evident on the spot, where the original bank on which the stones used to stand can be seen; it was not used for replacing them. Not all of the stones were replaced. The recumbent stone and its flankers were set up on the north of the circle, and no argument can be based on its unique position. They deserve a place in our Plates by their interesting appearance.

### *The Old Rayne Circle.*

#### PLATE XXXII.

The Old Statistical Account of this parish remarks that "we have no antiquities excepting two Druidical temples, which are common in every part of the county. The Bishop of Aberdeen had formerly a house at Old Rain in this parish." The postal address of Rayne is still Old Rayne.

The New Statistical Account tells us that in the south-east of the parish there is a Law, a conical hill, on which trials were held. The Druidical temple is four hundred yards from the village of Old Rain (the more usual spelling). Another Druidical circle is seen on the east side of the hill of Rothmaise.

We have already noted, under Midmar, that the Standing Stones of Rayne have their place in the history of the country. The records preserved in the

Register of the Church of Aberdeen inform us that in May 1349 King David the Second and his lieutenant specially ordered the Justiciar of Scotland north of the water of Forth, William Earl of Ross and Lord of Sky, to restore to the Bishop of Aberdeen any of his lands which had been unlawfully seized. King David Bruce, the second and last Bruce King, was at that date a prisoner of war in England. He had been a prisoner for three years after the Battle of the Standard and was to be in prison eight years more. Hence the order from "our Lord King and his lieutenant." The lieutenant of the kingdom north of Forth was William the fifth of the ancient Earls of Ross, coming direct from Ferquhard the first Earl. William was by birth and position well suited for his important post of Justiciar. He was first cousin of the captive King, his mother Maud being a sister of King Robert Bruce. William of St Mychael was proceeded against. He had been guilty of deforciamment personally done. The Justiciar states that in accordance with the order given to him, he attended personally, with a large number of nobles of the King's Council and of his own Council, at the Standing Stones of Rane in the Garioch, *apud stantes lapides<sup>1</sup> de Rane en le Garniach*. Mr Reaper, the Minister of Rayne, informs us that in 1304 Lentush was sold along with Rothmaise to Henry of St Michael by Duncan grandson of Adam of Rane, to be held of the Bishop of Aberdeen. It appears that William of St Mychael, presumably Henry's successor, not satisfied with Lentush and Rothmaise, had seized the tenement of Brennes and held it against the Bishop's officers, a grave and notorious illegality. William of St Mychael tried a legal quibble, but he was arrested and imprisoned and all the lands he claimed to hold of the Bishop were taken from him. The Justiciar states that the process at the Standing Stones was a process in the Bishop's Court, *in plena curia reverendi patris domini Willelmi Dei gratia episcopi Aberdonensis*.

Although the St Michael family were holders of land at Rothmaise, the case we are considering was not tried at Rayne because it related to some local property. It was tried there because that was the head court of the Bishops of Aberdeen from the time when they had resided there. Brennes had nothing to do with that district, and the *tenementum* was an important estate in land. Among great gifts to the Bishopric by King Malcolm<sup>2</sup> was *terra de Elone que dicitur Brynnes episcopi*, a territory in Ellon called Bishop's Brynnes, *in*

<sup>1</sup> We have a curious parallel to this, and to the *usque ad stantes petras* at Auld Keig, in an English charter of the reign of Edward the Second, 1307-1326, stating the boundaries of an estate near Easingwold in Yorkshire. The boundary runs *usque ad cruces Paulini*, Christian stones long lost, which must then have been close on 700 years old. Sir Norman Lockyer makes the pagan stones of Auld Keig, now still standing, either 2351 years old to-day or 3740.

<sup>2</sup> per Malcolmum Regem qui mortuus est virgo, that is, Malcolm IV, 1153-1165. The references for these various statements are in the Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis i. 80, 185, 186, 419, ii. 126.

*Bochania* as we learn from another document. The document referred to appears to shew that there was some special connection between Brynnes in Buchan and our district. It recites the following details of the king's gift :— the land of Brynnes in Buchan ; the shire of Daviot with the church and the church lands ; the shire of Rane with the church and church lands ; the shire of Oyne with the church and church lands ; the shire of Clatt with the church ; the shire of Tulynestyn with the church ; and the barony of Murthil. Bishop's Brynnes is now Dudwick.

We can carry the fortunes of St Michaels and of Brynnes further down in history. We have found Henry of St Michael purchasing lands at Rayne in 1304, and William of St Michael deprived of all his lands in 1342. We find John of St Michael holding the lands of Brenes in Buchan of the Bishop of Aberdeen in 1392, and surrendering the same on April 24 of that year to the Bishop, after long examination and consideration by the Dean and Chapter.

The said lands were at that date granted to Canon William Lange, and presumably they formed the endowment of his Canonry. On May 20, 1543, we find them feued by the bishop, with consent of the dean and chapter, to Elizabeth Haye and after her death to William Abernethy, second son of the late Lord Saltoun and his lawful heirs. Again there seems to be some connection with Rayne, for the next deed of infeudation (June 7) is made by the Archdeacon to John Leslie and his heirs, of the ecclesiastical lands which are called the Kirkton of Rayne with the Ailhousecroft.

The great change in the order of things called the Reformation was evidently coming within sight.

The circle at Old Rayne is on the Candle Hill. Judging from its remains, it must have been well worthy of its marked place in history. Only one stone now stands, the stone to the east of the eastern flanker, where an important stone usually stands. It is 8 feet high, with a girth of 14 feet at base. The recumbent stone lies flat, only 16 inches of its thickness shewing above ground. It is 13 feet long and 7 feet broad, that is, it would stand 7 feet high. The west flanker is down, 11 feet long and 5 feet broad ; the stone next to it is also down, 8 feet by 3 feet. The east flanker is down, 9 feet long and 7 feet 6 inches broad.

We have pointed out an ancient connection between Old Rayne and Ellon. It is remarkable that there is said to be a Candle Hill at Ellon as well as at Rayne. There are three Candle Hills in our district, namely, one at Rayne, one at Hatton of Ardoyne, and one at Insch, all three in connection with circles. But the supposed Candle Hill at Ellon does not bear investigation, though the investigation brings out—as investigations usually do—a very interesting point, for which I am indebted to the Reverend Mr Colquhoun of the Manse and Mr Raeburn, LL.B., of Abbotshall, Ellon. It turns out that there are Candle

Lands at Ellon, though there is not a Candle Hill. In 1387, "the Great Register of the Archbishop of St Andrews" recorded, that the Bishop himself came north to enquire into the state of the Church lands in Ellon belonging to St Andrews. He found that lands called Candallan—Candle Lands—were due to provide 24 wax candles and to renew them twice in each year, for the light<sup>1</sup> before the great altar. It would be very quaint if our guess was right that the circles on the three Candle Hills in our district gave that name to the hill on which they stood because the magician signalled the passing of the times of the night by small fires at the sacred circle of the pagans with its altar, as here at Ellon we have Candle Lands so called because they provided the lights for the Christian altar at St Andrews.

*The Balquhain Circle.*

## PLATE XXXIII.

"Chapel of Garioch" does not sound like the old name of a Scottish parish. Accordingly, we find in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland, xi. 41. 500, that early in the 17th century the church was transferred from Logie Durno, the old name of the parish, on the north side of the water of Ury, to the east end of the hill of Bannochie, and the parsonage of Fetterneer on the north side of Don was annexed to the parish, which was then appointed by decree to be called Chapel of Garioch. The account adds that there is a Druidical temple near the old ruinous castle of Balquhain. From the castle is one of the finest echoes of Scotland.

The old castle of Balquhain, built about 1530, was ordered to be burned down by the Duke of Cumberland on his way to Culloden in 1746. The tradition is that one of the tenants of the estate bribed the soldiers, who used damp straw. The great battle of Harlaw was fought here in 1411, when the Earl of Mar defeated Donald of the Isles. Sir Walter Scott held that this battle settled the question whether the Gaelic race or the Saxon race should be predominant in Scotland. We should not use that phrase, "the Saxon race," now.

The modern residence of the Leslies of Balquhain, Fetterneer, was burned in 1919.

Mr James Logan included the Balquhain circle among the circles on which he wrote to the Earl of Aberdeen, President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, in 1827, published in *Archæologia* in 1829<sup>2</sup>.

Mr Logan gives a statement by Hector Boece with a remarkable reference to the position of the tallest stones in circles. "Fergus the First," the quotation

<sup>1</sup> It was called "lie Park" in the St Andrews Register, and *le perfi* in the copy at Aberdeen.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, xxii. 1829.

runs, "was a great restorer of learning and religion, and caused great circles, the highest stones towards the south, to be erected." That was three hundred years before Christ. Sir Norman Lockyer gives 250 B.C. as the date of erection of the Braehead Leslie circle, if Arcturus was the star of alignment, and under the same condition places the circles at Ley Lodge, Louden Wood, and Tomnagorn, in the same century with Fergus the First. If Capella was the star, the corresponding dates were B.C. 2000 to 1860.

Mr Logan gives us the following description of the remains of this circle of Balquhain as it was a hundred years ago. We use Mr Logan's terms, such as "altar."

Eight stones remain. The altar is 13 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 4 feet high. It rests on another block, level with the ground. There is an obelisk 30 feet distant towards the east, of a triangular form, about 10 feet high. The circle is 60 or 70 feet in diameter. One of the lateral stones of the altar is prostrate. Another—no doubt meaning another of the stones of the circle, not the other lateral stone—was lately overturned in consequence of some persons digging too near it. The stones are not in general very deeply planted in the ground. This has been observed at Stonehenge. Their stability evinces the skill with which they were poised.

That is Mr Logan's interesting account. His drawing shews that the obelisk is the stone furthest off the fallen flanker of the recumbent stone. He evidently regards it as outside the circle, as indeed it is; it stands  $18\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the southern-most pillar of the circle.

This fine shapely obelisk is a puzzling feature in both of our Plates. The view which shews all the stones as almost in a straight line is taken from the south and shews the convex curve of the circle. The two western-most stones are on the left hand; the eastern-most stones shew small beyond the left side of the obelisk. The recumbent stone is very handsome from this south position, with its standing flanker at one end and the fallen flanker at the other.

In the other Plate it is not easy to recognise this stone on its north side as the same stone, and here again the obelisk is rather a puzzle. It might be passed off as a standing flanker. The stone on the extreme left is a fine stone, the southern-most stone of the circle, the obelisk being  $28\frac{1}{2}$  feet from it.

The circle is better reached from the Inveramsay side than from the Balquhain side.

The cup-markers have been at work on this circle. The fallen flanker has four, perhaps five, cup marks. On the stone west of the west flanker, there are at the edge of the face three cup marks in a vertical line, regular, and two irregular above. Near the bottom of the stone there is a remarkable row of six cups in a beautifully regular horizontal line, unlike any that I have seen. They have a surprising likeness to a seal from Nineveh which Miss Christian



Malagan figures in her book on the Hill Forts, etc., of Scotland. On the seal they are the heads of a file of soldiers. Mr Ritchie tells me that at Balhaggerty, across the Urie, about a mile and a half from our circle, there is a standing stone, the remains of a circle, with four cups in a horizontal row and a good many irregularly above.

We have seen that Mr Logan writes without hesitation of the "altar stone" in 1827. In 1850 Mr Patrick Chalmers, F.S.A., exhibited to the same Society of Antiquaries (of London) rough sketches of a remarkable circle of stones in Aberdeenshire, and of what was termed an ancient "altar stone" in the same locality. What the locality was, the Proceedings (Thursday Nov. 28, 1850) do not say.

We accept gratefully another hint from Mr James Logan. He held that when churches were built the people who used to hold the Courts at the circles held them at the Churches, until one of the canons of the Church prohibited the laity from "holding Courts in Churches."

### *Louden Wood, Old Deer.*

#### PLATE XXXIII.

This circle has very closely resembled that at Aikey Brae. The photographer had some difficulty in finding it, as had Mr Coles<sup>1</sup>. It is in the recesses of a large wood within the policies of Pitfour House. There is a foot-path leading to it.

The west flanker, the recumbent stone, and two stones almost exactly opposite each other, are still *in situ*. Three other stones, all fallen, remain in their places; one is the east flanker, 8 feet, two are  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet long. It has clearly been a fine circle. As at Aikey Brae the stones are on a bank.

The recumbent stone is  $10\frac{1}{4}$  feet long, of the average height of 4 feet. Mr Coles puts its weight at 12 tons. It is on the south-west part of the circumference. Mr Coles makes the normal line point E.N.E., which he describes as an unusual direction. Mr Peter makes it point due north. Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment of an angle of  $11^{\circ} 15'$  with the due north, and assigns a date of B.C. 370 if Arcturus was the star watched or B.C. 1890 if Capella.

There is an interesting *Book of the Parish of Deir*<sup>2</sup>, edited by the Minister, the Reverend Alexander Lawson, B.D. It is a collection of essays on various aspects of that very ancient place, with its Abbey and its famous "Book of Deer" now in the Library of the University of Cambridge. One of the

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.* xix. 375.

<sup>2</sup> Aberdeen, 1896. The old spellings of Deer are Dere, Deir, Deyr.

Essays is devoted to the "Stone Circles of Deir," by Mr James Spence; in it Mr Spence quotes evidence of attacks by Celtic peoples upon Scandinavian heroes who consulted their god at his "mossy stone of power" in a circle. It is an idea which may carry far.

*Aikey Brae, or Park House, Old Deer.*

PLATE XXXIV.

This circle is well known in Buchan. When complete it must have been specially fine. It is about two miles from Maud.

The stones are set on a clearly defined ridge, which shews their proportions well. The west flanker has fallen; it seems to have stood quite 9 feet clear of the ground. The recumbent stone, as will be seen in the Plate, finishes off very square at its east end. It is  $14\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, and Mr Coles puts its weight at  $21\frac{1}{2}$  tons. Three other stones of the circle are standing *in situ*. They are consecutive stones, running from west to north, from  $6\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 feet in height. The fallen stones in the quadrant east to south have been unusually fine.

The normal line from the recumbent stone points east of north-east. Mr Peter's drawing shews it pointing slightly west of north. Sir Norman Lockyer gives the alignment an angle of only  $4^{\circ} 15'$  with the true north, and assigns a date of B.C. 500 if Arcturus was the star watched or B.C. 1760 if Capella.

The Old Statistical Account says:—

"There were not many years ago the remains of upwards of a dozen druidical circles in this parish. One situated on the hill of Parkhouse not far from the village of Deer is the most complete. The horizontal stone on the south is 14 feet long, containing about 250 solid feet." If the writer of the account had taken the length as  $14\frac{1}{2}$  feet, his estimate of bulk would have agreed fairly closely with Mr Coles's estimate of weight.

*The Culsalmond Circle.*

We have described circles or the remains of circles in the parishes of Rayne and Inch. The parish of Culsalmond lies between these two parishes. The New Statistical Account states (p. 732) that the name of the parish is taken to mean "the end of the hill lands." The author gives a record which should not be lost; it reminds us of the care taken at Midmar not to allow the Christian Church to sweep away the earlier religious place of worship. The record is as follows:—

A Druidical place of worship anciently stood about the middle of the churchyard or burying ground. It consisted of a circle of twelve upright large granite stones from Benochree, which were overturned when the first Christian

temple was erected. One of these was taken up in 1821 and now remains above ground, near the spot where it was taken up. The other eleven are still underground.

*The Backhill Circle, Old Deer.*

A third circle in the parish of Old Deer must have been rather specially fine. It is known as the Backhill of Auchmachar Circle. There is little of it left, but the pillar stones were 8 and 10 feet high, and the "altar stone" remains,—in a sense. This stone was subjected to ill-treatment "many years since." A nephew of the farmer lighted "a Hallowe'en fire upon the surface, with the result that the mass was rent into fragments, which still [1896] lie in the heap they presented on the morning after the fire, showing that the stone had never undergone the ordeal by fire on any previous occasion. Whatever else may have been the use of this stone, it could not have been used as an altar, and in all probability this holds good of the table stones in other circles."

It must be pointed out that the argument thus stated does not bear examination. It assumes that if a stone does not withstand a Christmas bonfire after some two thousand years of exposure to the severities of a rigorous climate, it could not possibly have borne the moderate heat of a burnt offering when it was fresh from the quarry. But the argument goes further than that, and assumes that if a stone is not suitable for burnt offerings it cannot be an altar. This is a confusion of ideas. The druidical human sacrifices were for the shedding of blood upon an altar stone. In the case where the death was by fire, it was in a cage of wickerwork, not on a stone. The surface of the early Jewish Altar of Burnt Offering, and the whole substance of the later, was of brass. The other altars were of wood.

We are not aware of any evidence that the druidical altars or the Recumbent Stones were for burnt offerings.

*The Devil's Ninepins.*

It may be of interest to give at this point an instructive account of a well known group of stones in England, much visited as antiquities, known as The Devil's Ninepins, at Ipsden, Wallingford, Berks.

This collection of 27 stones was made in 1827, not as a forgery of an antique, but rather for the sake of keeping together a number of large stones scattered about the neighbourhood. The work was conceived and carried out by the great-uncle of the present owner, when he was on sick leave from India and only 20 years of age. In later years he was Mr Edward Anderdon Reade, C.B. The present owner is Mr Herbert V. Reade, C.B.

The following is an extract from Mr Edward Reade's diary :

"October 8, 1827. I had for some time formed a project of building a sort of Druids' Temple with some large useless stones that are in the neighbourhood.

October 13. We performed a most signal work in moving the Hailey Stone this day, one of immense size and intended to be the king of the others. By dint of large levers we got it upon a sledge contrived on purpose ; and farmer Wear, our good-natured tenant, brought nine horses, all of whom had enough to do to get this monstrous stone to its destination. When arrived within a few feet of its destination, the sledge broke all to pieces, happily not before."

My friend the present owner of the Ninepins has kindly given me the measurements of the Hailey Stone. In statuary marble it would weigh about three tons. We have noted 25 tons as the weight of one of the principal stones in our Caledonian Circles.

### *The Clava Circles, Nairn.*

#### PLATE XXXVI.

We now turn to a brief comparison with our Aberdeenshire Circles of Circles in Nairn and Inverness.

We owe our five plates XXXV—XXXIX to the skill of the Hon. Esmé Smyth, Ness Castle.

When we leave the Aberdeenshire circles and make our way to the circles of Nairn, we find ourselves in a different world. Taking Clava as the Stone-henge of Nairn, we see there an enormous circular mound of stones piled up symmetrically, stones large enough to make climbing about among them very dangerous to ankles and legs. In the principal mound there is in the centre a deep circular well-chamber, access to which is only attained by climbing up the mound to the top. We looked in vain for any sign of a line of approach over the big stones forming the vast mound. It is difficult to imagine this magnificent monument being used for any of the purposes usually assigned to stone circles. Any more impossible rostrum for a public speaker than this pile of blocks cannot well be imagined. One public speaker who contrived to take his elderly legs up to the top and look down into the central chamber felt very glad when he got down again with whole limbs.

At a distance of about seven yards from the circular base of this symmetrical hill of stones, large stones are set. The place is so overgrown with every kind of prickly and scratchy growth that it is far from easy to count with fair approach to accuracy the several great stones in this outer circle in any of the three great monuments lying near one another in the area all blocked by un-forested trees and unchecked shrubs. We had a general impression of "nine or ten at least," and, so far as the compass shewed, of the carrying out

of the instructions of Fergus the First in 300 B.C., *teste* Hector Boece, "the tallest pillars to the south." There did not appear to be any indication of any special place of entrance between the great stones standing far apart. Probably the nine or ten spaces between the great stones were equally open to entrance or equally closed, while the highest pillar or the two highest pillars shewed the ceremonial place of entrance. It is evident that with a circular gangway of seven yards in width magnificent processions could pace round the area within the line of pillar-stones. Plate XXXVI shews the tallest of the stones, with a six-foot measure by its side. A very rough estimate suggested that this great slab stone is a little south of south-west of the mound, as though the ceremonial entrance might be between it and the next to the right of the picture. But both the greatly superior size of the single stone, and the arrangement of one great stone at the entrance which we shall see immediately at the Druids' Temple at Inverness, suggest that the single stone marks the place of entrance to the mound.

*The Druids' Temple Farm Circle near Inverness.*

PLATES XXXV, XXXVII, XXXVIII.

Passing now into the shire of Inverness we find ourselves again in a new world of temple-building art. It is clear that at the great site on the Druids' Temple farm we are in the presence of the most advanced stage of the art. The temple here is as far removed from Clava as it is from the neighbourhood of Dunecht in its principal feature.

There are two concentric circles, with an interior group of stones now in disorder. Plate XXXV shews the largest stone of the outer ring. Beyond it on the right, near the trees, the next of the great stones of the outer ring is seen lying. In front of these two stones are two stones lying down, apparently the portal stones between which was the way from the great stone towards the entrance to the inner of the two circles. This would be a south-west entrance.

Plate XXXVII shews another entrance, between two of the great stones of the outer circle. It is very little north of east, and it is the natural line of entrance from the glen in which the Druid priests are supposed to have dwelled. The two fine stones are 15 feet apart. Passing through them toward the centre of the temple, you come to a corresponding opening 15 feet wide in the close-packed boulders which form the inner ring. Five of these are seen on the right of the picture, and between the two outliers are seen the continuation of the close-packed boulders with the top of the next outlier shewing above.

Plate XXXVIII shews the south-west opening. In the foreground are the two stones shewn in Plate XXXV lying down, presumably the portal

stones between which the pathway went from the great stone shewn in Plate XXXV. The close-packed boulders on the left are clear, as is the opening, and the continuance of the impassable ring. Across the inner circle we see from the inside a large number of this ring of stones, up to the opening we saw in Plate XXXVII.

In the centre of the inner ring are seen large stones lying about in disorder. We have suggested elsewhere that special force must have been employed to produce this confusion, leading us to suppose that here we are at the *penetralia* of whatever was the most barbarous part of the temple worship, and have evidence of the violence of reforming zeal when the devilish ceremonial was abolished. There has been no attempt to disturb any of the noble boulders closely packed which formed the enclosure. So far as the outer ring of great stones is concerned, there is no sign of intentional overthrow in the case of those that have fallen.

The diameter of the outer ring has been about 80 feet. Nine of the stones have fallen, seven or eight are standing. Their dimensions are considerable, heights from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet, girths from 14 to  $15\frac{1}{2}$  feet. One which is lying quite clear of soil is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet long and 6 feet broad.

The diameter of the close-set ring of boulders is about 36 feet ; 28 of its stones are *in situ*.

In a paper in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, xviii. p. 360 some interesting averages are given in respect of the stone circles of Nairn and Inverness.

The average number of stones in the outer of the three concentric circles is 11. These are large stones described above, standing far off each other.

The average diameter of the outer circle is 96 feet ; of the intermediate circle 53 feet ; of the inner circle which is usually found in Nairn and Inverness, 19 feet.

The average place of entry is S.  $18^{\circ}$  W. This is the most important of the averages. It shews that from the place of entry, which corresponds to the Aberdeenshire recumbent stone and may be called the place of observation, the alignment across the centre of the circle has an angle of  $18^{\circ}$  with the true north. Thus the normal line of observation strikes the horizon at a point far north of the furthestmost northern point of sunrise.

### *The Cullaird Circle, Torbreck.*

#### PLATE XXXIX.

This is a very pretty little circle of unusual type near Ness Castle. It is of about the dimensions of the average inner ring of the set of three concentric circles of Nairn and Inverness. It stands in a large open field under plough,



on a slightly raised saucer-like circle of old grass turf. There are nine stones, the one to the right fallen, the one on this side of it propped by a large block. The tallest stone is about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet high. The two tallest stones have rather the air of flankers, but the little circle is as unlike anything to be seen in Aberdeen as can well be conceived. If it is a lone circle it is difficult to see its purpose. The local tradition is that people went there "to pray to the stones." If it is the innermost of three concentric circles, as the practice of the neighbourhood would suggest, there is no sign at all of the large number of great stones that must have been round it, and the stones are unusually fine for an innermost circle of three, besides which, the innermost circle was usually of stones closely packed together.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Ogam Inscriptions.*

The Ogam script.—Its origin.—Secret finger-speaking.—Not very ancient.—The Aboyne ogam.—Boustrophedon reading.—The Brandsbutt stone.—Its ornament.—Its reading.—The Brodie ogam.—The Scoonie ogam.—A Scots bishop trained in Ireland dying among the Picts.—The talkativeness of the Irish and Brythonic Gael.—The silence of the Pict.

THE presence of Ogam inscriptions is a marked and important feature of the district under consideration. Ireland is the home of Ogam inscriptions, where they are counted in hundreds. It is usual to spell the descriptive name of these characters as Ogham; but the presence of the *h* would cause that word to be pronounced in Irish as *om*, with a long *o*. It is said that the word means a twig.

The key to the ogam script, if script it can be called, is shewn in diagram on Plate XL. It is called the bethluisnion, pronounced beylushneen, from the Irish name of three of the first five letters, *b*, *l*, and *n*. Similarly the Runic alphabet is called the futhork, from its first six letters, *f*, *u*, *th*, *o*, *r*, *k*. The corresponding name for our own series of letters is the abc, the Latin name was abcdarium. "Alphabet" is of course the Greek name, from alpha beta, the names of the first two letters.

Inasmuch as it is necessary to say something of this curious ogam script, I venture to repeat some elementary suggestions which I made thirty years ago.

One characteristic feature of the ogam digits is this—the last digit of each of the four series of five gives in each case the extra trouble of five incisions on the stone, and yet represents a letter of very frequent use. The four letters are *n*, *q*, *r*, *i*. So far as economy of labour is concerned, each of these should have needed one incision instead of five, while very infrequent letters should have required five incisions. Again, looking at the first digit of each series, *b*, *h*, *m*, and *a*, each requiring only one incision, *b* is far from being a usual letter in ogam, and *h* is practically unknown in Irish ogam<sup>1</sup>. The two others, *m* and *a*, are very frequent in ogam, and might on the ground of economy of labour fairly claim one incision. But when we compare the frequency of *a* with the frequency of *i* which requires five incisions, we must remember that we are dealing with an inflectional period, when a terminal *i* was naturally frequent, the names on memorial stones being in the genitive case. And even when inflectional change had ceased, and with it the terminal *i*, the *i* asserted itself

<sup>1</sup> A stone was supposed to have been found at Clonmacnois with Colman bocht on it, poor Colman, with the ogam *h*, but it could not be found when sought for. It has been supposed to occur more than once in Caledonia.



in the interior of the word, *mac* becoming *mhic* and *callich caillich*, so that *i* retained its frequency.

We naturally ask ourselves, what was the origin of this curious and clumsy way of representing letters ?

There is said to be a legend that at one time the ogams had ten letters ; then twelve, then sixteen ; lastly, when fully developed by Hercules, the reputed hero of literature, the present twenty letters. Some thirty years ago when pondering over the possible bearing of these successive supposed developments, the fact that they began with two groups of five, passed on to three groups of four, then to four groups of four, and then went on to four groups of five, suggested the original use of the fingers and thumb of both hands for the purpose of making signs, then the less clumsy use of the four fingers only, then a return to the use of the thumb as well as the fingers.

Then came in the question of frequently used letters, with the enquiry, is it simpler to hold up all five of our digits or to select one, or two, and hold them up ? Clearly it is simplest to hold up all five. Thus the inherent simplicity of the indication by shew of full hand involves the inherent labour of representing the five digits on a stone, when a lapidary record is required. Next to holding up all five, the easiest thing is to hold up the index finger.

To these considerations there were added ideas drawn from Cæsar's description of the priests of the magical art, called by him Druids, of whom a good deal has been said in previous chapters. They did not write down the secrets of their art. All had to be learned by heart by those who were in training for the profession of magician. From this it seemed to follow that magicians would not talk to one another of their art or business in the presence of common people ; and thence emerged the idea that they had secret ways of conversing one with another. Our ordinary deaf-and-dumb alphabet was invented about the middle of the eighteenth century by a French abbé ; but in that system the fingers make as closely as they can the actual shapes of the letters, and thus they are not secret. But two magicians could converse privately in the presence of a whole congregation if they knew that to hold up one, two, three, four, five digits of the right hand meant five letters, and with the left five more, thus giving ten letters. The use of the two hands in combinations would give ten more, the fingers of the right hand being laid on the palm of the left, and the fingers of the left hand on the palm of the right.

When the inviolable secrecy of druid conversation had ceased to be essential, and ogam memorial inscriptions began to be used in the time of transition, the digits formed by the right hand were scored at the left side of the surface of the memorial stone, and the left hand digits on the left edge of the stone, round the corner as it were. Thus *b, l, f, s, n* were shewn by one, two, three, four, five horizontal scratches on the surface, and *h, d, t, c, q*, on the edge. Five

more letters were indicated by slanting scratches which began on the edge and passed round on to the surface. There remained the five vowels, in itself an indication that the ogam cannot claim a remote or a rude antiquity. The five vowels are shewn by corresponding notches on the arris or sharp edge of the stone; or, in Scotland, by short horizontal lines passing from one side of the arris to the other. In some cases the horizontal lines representing vowels are as long on each side of the edge as the other letters are. The precedence given to the broad vowels, *a*, *o*, *u*, is a further sign of comparative lateness.

There is one ogam inscription in Aberdeenshire which has dots for vowels. It is at Aquhollie<sup>1</sup>. It is said to be "seemingly Pictish in language." Rhys read it as *venonitedov*.

Diphthongs would be represented in various ways, among others, by combining the fingers of the hands. There is here a curious confirmation of the theory set forth. To cross the two index fingers gives *ea*, to cross two fingers with two gives *ia*, to cross four with four, the easiest thing to do, gives *ae*. There is no crossing three with three; to bring up the third finger after bringing up the first and second together, is with most people a matter of some little difficulty, and may have been more difficult in early days.

When this whole theory of origin came before the late Sir John Rhys, whom I did not then know, he wrote to me that he withdrew his chapters on the subject and accepted my theory. My friend Dr R. A. F. Macalister has given valuable reasons for the existing arrangement of the twenty letters in the four groups.

When the whole of an ogam inscription is on the face of a stone, an artificial edge or arris is made by drawing a vertical line to serve as an edge. In some cases the vertical line is replaced by a horizontal line, the scores below the line being the right hand scores, those above the line the left hand scores.

The ordinary ogam inscriptions begin at the bottom of the stone at the left side, and run up vertically towards the top.

The simplest form of memorial inscription in ogam is [This is the memorial stone] "of Hugh son of Donald," where *Hugh*, *son*, and *Donald*, are all in the genitive and each ends with five dots or five short horizontal strokes. The first biliteral and bilingual stone was found at St Dogmael's, below Cardigan. The Romano-British inscription on the surface of the stone was *Sagrani fili Cunutami*, (the stone) "of Sagan son of Cunutam." The ogam inscription read *Sagramni maqi Cunatami*, (the stone) "of Sagramn son of Cunatam." The omission in the Latin of the *m* in the man's name, and the variation of the broad vowel in the father's name, are of course points of interest in the matter of pronunciation.

We can now proceed to examine some of the very few Caledonian ogams.

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.* 1891-2, vol. xxvi. p. 270.

*The Aboyne Inscription.*

Thirty years ago, the Marquis of Huntley had a cast of this stone made for me when I was Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge and was lecturing on the Scottish stones; my rubbing from the cast is shewn on Plate XL. In 1920 I again met the Marquis, and he gave me the photograph which is well reproduced on Plate XLI. The stone is specially interesting by reason of its combining an ogam inscription with the interlacing pattern on the surface of the stone, an ordinary piece of work, not to be compared with the marvellous interlacements on some of the Scottish stones. Of course the law of alternate over and under is carefully observed; a single slip in that respect would spoil the whole. The mirror also is well done. What the shape of the stone has been, it is impossible to guess; so far as we can judge, the interlacing panel must have been on the skew, a very singular fact if it is a fact.

While we have described the interlacement as an ordinary piece of work, it is as a matter of fact a good example of the figure-of-eight style, giving the appearance of a series of figures of eight but really consisting of continuous endless bands. We have at Aboyne a rude stone, removed from Loch Kinord, which has upon it a cross  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. long, with interlacing patterns occupying the whole of the head, arms, and stem, of the cross. The interlacements are curiously varied in character, the continuous bands, presumably two in number, forming themselves into distinctive types, one in the head, another in the two arms, another in the stem. In the stem the type resembles the figure-of-eight type which is so regular on the ogam slab; but in one case, at the centre of the stem, the designer has been driven into inserting an isolated complete figure of eight. From the point of view of a pattern symbolising eternity, this is a serious flaw.

With work on the whole in itself careful, it is not possible to suppose that the same fairly skilled workman cut the irregular and inartistic lines which form the stem-line of the ogam inscription, or cut the ogam scores. We may suppose that the friends of some deceased person scored these wandering lines, and shakily incised the ogams, on a piece of stone already bearing the pattern we see. The possible alternative, that some cutter of interlacing patterns selected for his purpose a flat stone with an ogam inscription of this evidently inartistic character, may certainly be rejected. And I cannot accept, even as a very last resort, the idea that ogam was so much used in Pictish Caledonia that it was used to register some important fact, such as the dedication of a church. Our first attempt should be to discover an interpretation which gives us something of the nature of an epitaph.

Further, I should be prepared to find it necessary to read up one of the two lines, and continue down the other, or *vice versa*. This method was adopted in

old Greek inscriptions, and was called boustrophedon, turning the ploughing oxen round at the bottom of a furrow to plough up the next. Further still, I should begin to read the outer line first and then the inner line.

It only remains to decide at which end of the outer line we are to begin. On this depends at which end of the inner line our boustrophedon principle makes us begin. A glance at that inner line shews us that we must begin it at the bottom, for there we have quite clearly *maqqoi talluor rh*, "son" (in the genitive) "of Talorc" or Talorcan, a well-known Pictish royal name, the name of several Pictish kings, one of them, quaintly enough, the nephew of our own Oswald, king and martyr. Oswald's brother Eanfrith had fled to the Picts and had married a Pictish princess. Her son by him became king of the Picts by their law of mother-right, and is known in their history as Talorc Mac Ainfrit.

Thus, if we proceed on the boustrophedon principle we must begin at the top of the outer line, as my correspondent of many years ago, the late Earl of Southesk, did. He read *ffennaac arborfthhaan* and interpreted it as marking the burial "of Fineach" or Finn (a common name) "of Aborfthaan," "son" (as the next line reads) "of Talorcan." He suggests that Aborfthaan may be the original of the word Aboyne. I have found a curious confirmation of this suggestion, the Irish "Innisboyne" being so called from St Baothan.

I cannot agree with Lord Southesk's view that what seems in two cases to be a cross, and thus to mean *ea* is in fact two crooked lines meaning *aa*.

The opposition reading of the outer line from bottom upwards, which is the natural course, is given as *nea hhtla robbait ceanneff*. This reading its supporters interpret as "Nechtan dedicated Kinneff," which does not appear to account for the genitive of the next line. As a fact, this reading was due to an incorrect copy. Read that way, the ogams give *naahhtf robbac caanneff*.

In any case, the presence of two examples of *h* in one inscription in Caledonia contrasts suspiciously with the absence of that letter in the inscriptions in Ireland.

We could scarcely have a fuller example of ogam difficulties than this.

#### *The Brandsbutt Brodie and Scoonie Stones.*

We owe the information about the Brandsbutt stone, and the very clear photograph, Plate XLI, to the kindness of the Countess of Kintore.

The word 'butt' recurs perpetually in the neighbourhood of the river Urie. A 'butt' appears to be an isolated or independent piece of land under cultivation, the origin of the word being said to be the Celtic *bod*. Presumably the French *bout* is the same word. Du Cange gives many examples of the use of *butta terrae* for a bit of land. Some thirteen or fourteen 'butts' are named in

connection with Inverurie by Davidson<sup>1</sup>. Brandsbutt, at the farm-house of which the stone under consideration is to be seen, appears very early as a place at the march of the burgh with Blackhall.

The stone is certainly very remarkable ; it might without overstraining the point be described as unique. The ornamentation of the three portions of the stone which have so far been found is decidedly skilful in execution and is in itself of great interest. It consists of a small part of the 'crescent symbol,' and practically the whole of the 'serpent.' Illustrations of these will be found on Plates LIV and LV, from stones at Aberlemno and Meigle. The Brandsbutt Stone differs from those examples in being a rude stone monument, not a carefully shaped memorial stone with a great cross on its other side. Remarks on the 'crescent' and the 'serpent,' with the jointed pins with ornamental heads, will be found in Chapter XI. It should be noted here that the crescent has been divided into portions by curved lines in a manner peculiar, I think, to this district of Scotland. Reference to this feature is made in Chapter XI.

It is not improbable that we have the whole of the ogam inscription, and almost all of it is rather unusually clear. The fracture where the triangular piece of stone is fitted on to the main piece may account for the loss of a digit, and there may have been a fifth stroke of the last 'letter,' not traceable on the stone. I have tried in vain to see the stone to decide these points. I am told it is lying face downwards in a field, contrary to the information I had received of its being in the farm-house. We may give the reading thus: *irata ddarr(or e)nn(or s)*.

Taking the *r* and *n* in preference to the *ε* and *s*, this would be curiously in accord with the ogam name on the Brodie Stone, discovered in digging the foundations of the church at Moy and Dyke, and moved before 1856 to Brodie Castle between Nairn and Forres. The Earl of Southesk read the name there as *ed darr non*. The stone at Scoonie in Fife, Plate XL, which has on it a large example of the 'elephant' symbol, and three men on horseback and two hounds chasing a beautifully drawn stag, has been used later for an ogam inscription which is carried past the raised foreleg and the muzzle of the stag, and runs thus, *ed darr non n*, in very clear script.

A volume might be written on the queer ornamentation of the Brodie Stone. But for our present purpose we must confine our investigation to its ogam inscription, so closely akin to the Scoonie and Brandsbutt inscriptions.

Addarrnn, with its "Pictish" characteristic duplication of *d* and *r* and *n*, or Eddarrnon as at Brodie<sup>2</sup>, is presumably identical with Ethernan. There is

<sup>1</sup> Inverurie and the Earldom of the Garioch. Aberdeen, A. Brown and Co., 1878, pages 183-5.

<sup>2</sup> The Oghams at Brodie, Aquhollie, Golspie, and Newton. By the Earl of Southesk, K.T., F.S.A. Scot. Edinburgh, Neill and Co., 1886.

a consecrated well at Burghhead, some ten miles distant from Dyke and Brodie, called St Ethan's well. That name, pronounced with a soft *th*, may well be the survival of the double *d* and double *r* and double *n* of the ogams.

But we can come nearer to our Brandsbutt name than that. Bishop Forbes gives us in his *Kalendar* an account of St Ethernan, a noble Scot who went to Ireland to study, and on his return became Bishop of Rathine in Buchan. In the annals of Ulster, A.D. 669, we have the entry *Itarnan et Corindu apud Pictones defuncti sunt*<sup>1</sup>. The death of the saint "among the Picts" is a strong argument for the identification of Itarnan with Ethernan the Bishop in Buchan, while the first two syllables *Irat*, may possibly suggest for the Brandsbutt Stone the claim that it alone, in its *Irataddarrnn* gives the whole real name of Ethernan. The Bishop appears to have gone southwards also, and to have preached in Fife.

These inscriptions afford an opportunity for noting a fact which must have a racial bearing.

The Irish rude stone monuments are very talkative. Their ogam inscriptions are counted by the hundred. The British and Romano-British monuments in Wales are equally talkative, in more than one script, including the ogam. British remains in England have practically disappeared; but there is no reason to suppose that the early men were less talkative in England than in Wales. The earliest Anglian monuments are talkative, in runes; more talkative than Irish or British, falling as they do on days of advanced development of literature.

When we turn to Pictland, we come into another world of monuments, very far excelling, in the variety and beauty and strangeness and abundance of their subjects, all other monuments of these islands put together; not even excepting the beautiful developments of Byzantine art at Ruthwell and Bewcastle. The Sculptured Stones of Scotland stand alone in the world, and they are numerous enough to fill many museums. In my Cambridge University lectures on these stones in 1890, I took count of seventy-four of them, exclusive of the large class of such sculptures found on rude stones. Excepting the very small number with the exotic ogam script of which we have been speaking, only a single one of these beautifully patterned stones has an inscription. The beautiful lettering is shewn on Plate XXXV. It is short, and its meaning is much disputed, as indeed is one at least of its letters, beautifully as it is cut. Personally, I have a very strong leaning towards the belief that it is the memorial stone of one Drost or Drust, son of Voret, of the family of Fergus, and that he is identical with a Pictish king of that name<sup>2</sup>. The wonderful workmanship of the Scottish Stones was wrought by or for a silent race; but when

<sup>1</sup> *Chronicles of the Picts and the Scots*, p. 71, *Annals of Tighernac*.

<sup>2</sup> In my view the three letters which may be read as *e l t* correspond to the Irish *u a* or *O*'.

they were so disposed, they could cut an inscription at least as well, we might put it higher, as any contemporary artist in these islands.

The inscriptions on the Newton Stone now at Inch, in ogam and in minuscules, are outside this particular consideration, not being on a Sculptured Stone. But they stand high among the unique interests of the area of Aberdeenshire with which on the whole we are dealing, and they must be dealt with in this connection. It is not too much to say that there is not in this island an inscription, or a series of inscriptions, so full of interest, raising so many questions, providing as we hope to show so many links with a past almost entirely forgotten.

## CHAPTER X

### *The Newton Stone.*

Supposed hopelessness of the inscriptions.—British Association at Cambridge 1862.—Earl of Aberdeen's letter on decay.—The Cataman inscription.—Third and sixth lines of minuscule are Greek.—The stone of St Wallach or Volocus.—His legend.—His Fair at Logie-Mar.—Coldstone.—His Bath etc. at Walakirk.—Beldorney and Insch.—Date of St Wallach.—The ogham inscription.—The other four lines of minuscules.—The Stone of King Aed or Aedh.—Burial at Inverurie.

IN the fine volume "The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland," by my old friend Romilly Allen, produced in 1903 by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Edinburgh: Neill and Co.), the problem of the Newton Stone is stated thus, after considerable discussion. "If the ogham inscription on the Newton Stone could be deciphered, we should possess, presumably at least, the purport of the other inscription, which is so remarkable for its illegibility. But unfortunately there is nearly as much diversity of opinion as to the correct reading of the ogham inscription as there is of the other; and though it is generally agreed that the stone is a commemorative monument like all the others of its class, the formula of commemoration is still unsettled in either of its duplicate renderings."

That being so, an attempt to read the ogham with any certainty or agreement seems almost useless; while an attempt to read the minuscule inscription at all, still more to make it agree with the ogham inscription which is not nearly so long though it may look so, is on the face of it hopeless. But I did make both of these attempts when lecturing to my class at Cambridge in 1890, and I repeat the attempts here, for what they may be worth.

Cambridge is closely connected with the story of this baffling inscription. A full discussion of it took place at the meeting of the British Association at Cambridge in 1862, when I was still living in Perthshire. The Hon. Arthur Gordon, afterwards Lord Stanmore, being a Cambridge man, had brought the subject before the authorities at Cambridge, and Dr Mill and others had studied the minuscules. My friend George Williams read to the Association Dr Mill's opinion, Dr Mill having died some time before. He held the inscription to be Phœnician, and read it as an address to the Syrian Esculapius. Mr Thomas Wright maintained that it was debased Latin; he read the first two lines *hic iacet Constantinus*, and later on he saw *filius* and the name of Constantine's father Constantius Chlorus in the genitive. Simonides at the same meeting said it was Greek, but gave it the same meaning as Mr Wright. Dr Davis, the explorer of Carthage, said it was Phœnician; and made it mean



a great deal. A learned Celtic scholar made it mean, among other things, "the boundary of the royal field." Mr Vaux of the British Museum declared it to be mediaeval Latin. Professor Aufrecht believed it to be Phoenician. The Minister of Public Instruction in Italy brought it before the Academy at Turin; the Academy pronounced it to be the work of a wag. One cannot say that all that is helpful or hopeful. Of course it did not point to any connection between the minuscule and the ogam inscriptions, for at that date the ogam characters were not understood, and the existence of the long row of scratches at the edge of the stone was not appreciated.

The late Earl of Aberdeen had before this written a letter which is printed in Stuart's *Sculptured Stones*. In it he stated that he first saw the stone in 1804, and that since that time it had been removed from an exposed place near the Pitmachie turnpike<sup>1</sup> and set up in the grounds of Mr Gordon of Newton, in the parish of Culsalmond. He stated that the surface of the stone was so overgrown with grey lichen that the lettering was scarcely distinguishable; but since its removal the frequent tracings and rubbings to which the letters had been subjected had completely destroyed the ancient surface of the letters. While it is probable that the removal of the lichen did damage the surface of the stone, we may fairly doubt the suggested destruction of granite surface by tracings and rubbings. This present hand has been in every letter of the inscription in 1920 and in 1889, and the only evident mark of decay in the interval is at the beginning of the sixth line, where the first two letters are becoming matters of faith rather than of sight.

In Dr Stuart's time, it was suggested that the Welsh inscription in commemoration of King Cataman or Cadfan, early in the seventh century, had some letters of the same character as those at Newton. The representation of that inscription<sup>2</sup> on Plate XLIII shews that there is not any likeness between the two inscriptions, in difficulty or otherwise. The Llangadwaldr example is very much less difficult to read, indeed it cannot be really called difficult. It runs thus,—*Catamannus rex sapientissimus opinatissimus omnium regum*, Cataman the king, the wisest, and most thought of, of all kings.

The stone which is shewn on Plate XL in the enclosure containing the Newton Stone has nothing to do with it; it came from a different place. It has a fine example of the serpent pierced by a jointed pin with handsome heads, a large head near the serpent's head, a smaller at its tail, and a double disc without the usual ornament and without the usual jointed pin with heads.

The six lines of minuscule inscription and the earliest part of the ogam inscription are shewn on Plate XL from a rubbing taken more than thirty

<sup>1</sup> The Great North Road had only recently been opened, and the turnpike set at Pitmachie. This brought the stone into prominence. The old road was on the other side of the Gady.

<sup>2</sup> From my *Life and Writings of the Venerable Bede*, 1919.

years ago. The whole of each of the two inscriptions is shewn fairly clearly on Plate XLII.

Turning now to an examination of the six lines of inscription, the first thing that strikes the eye is the marked difference between the third and sixth lines and the other four. These two lines are much more trim and balanced, and much better and more regularly cut. They are quite evidently Greek on the whole, with a slight admixture of other script.

We may remind ourselves, for what little it may be worth, that Julius Cæsar tells of the Druids that they learned by heart what it was their business to know, and that when they had to write anything down they used Greek letters.

The use of Greek letters, and their admixture with Latin letters, survived after the vestiges of Druidism as a regular discipline had passed away; much as one or two runic letters remained in use after runes had ceased to be the script of the Angles in England. We find Greek and Latin letters mingled on the later Byzantine coinage. More to the point for us is the fact that four of the Greek letters appear in the Latin text of the Gospels of St Chad at Lichfield, a manuscript attributed to the seventh century and to a combination of Irish and Anglian influence. The Greek colony of Marseilles naturally kept the Greek letters in use in Gaul.

What the meaning of the incisions at the commencement of the first of the two lines may be, it is hard to say. What letter is meant by a line cut through the middle of the final *o* of this line it is not easy to say. What the letter is which comes third from the end of the second line is doubtful. Putting a note of question at these three points, we read as the original inscription on the stone

?uolouoco?

logoup?tr

a well-balanced distich, which we may count as having nine letters in each line.

The line cut on the little round boss in the centre of the final *o* of the Saint's name may conceivably be an indication of a curious genitival termination. In early Irish MSS., and in the Lindisfarne Gospels, some of the capital letters in which the words are written are made very small, and are tucked away into adjoining letters, as in the *fili David* of the Gospel genealogy. On the Ruthwell Cross the final T of *tergebat*, in the story of the woman washing the Lord's feet and drying them with her hair, is inserted below the cross-bar of the previous A. The same incision occurs in the Drosten inscription at St Vigean's on Plate XXXV. It has been supposed to modify the *o* there. The same little sign, placed vertically, modifies the rune for *u* and makes it into a *y*; that is, the little sign is an *i*.

NOTE

Page 113, 11 lines from the bottom, for *ov* read *initial v*.



We find in the Aberdeen Breviary, and in early Scottish Calendars, a Saint called Volocus, variously spelled. He is described as a foreigner. Of course we do not know—how much we wish we did know!—how our early predecessors pronounced names. But in this case we have a hint. There was another Saint with a name of like formation, Molocus. The tradition of him is strong in a part of Pictish Scotland due south of the Newton Stone and about forty miles away. The penultimate syllable of his name is lengthened in the name of his fair at Alyth and Kirriemuir; it is called Symoloag's Fair. It is a far cry from Pictland to the Upper Engadine; but there we find a general treatment of the long *o* which is instructive as guiding us to a hint on early pronunciation. The inhabitants of the Upper Engadine appear to speak and write an early form of the Latin language. They write *tuots* for *totos* (all), and they pronounce it *too uts*. That appears to be a parallel to the pronunciation of Volōcus as Volouōcus.

The first five letters of the second line are quite clear; but it should be noted that in the thirty years which passed between my first and my latest fingering of the letters of this strange script, there has been some weathering of the stone at the earliest part of the line. It is clear that this means "of the word." The four remaining letters appear to be a mixture of alphabets. The second letter is a difficulty. Lord Southesk, who recognised that this one line is Greek, read it as an inverted A. I am willing to take it so, and read the line as "Father, or Teacher, of the Word." But it is more like a U. In those very early inscriptions two different forms of the same letter may occur without causing suspicion. If by any chance it were possible to show that Saint Volocus was called Priest in his own immediate home in Pictland, we might do worse than take the four letters as an abbreviation not of *pater* (or *patris*) but of *πρεσβύτερος*, presbyter.

We should add that in the Breviary and in the Calendars we have various forms of the name, Volocus, Wallach, Wolloch, and—ugly as it looks—Mak-wollok, which may have some relation to the incisions on the Newton Stone before the name *nolouoco*. The W evidently represents the *ov* of the inscription.

The tradition in the Breviary is given in Latin of very rude character, indicating an early origin; "great antiquity," Bishop Forbes says. Volocus was a foreigner. He lived in a little wattled hut. He died a very old man. When and where he died is not known to the Breviary, nor when he lived. "The churches of Tumeth and Logie-Mar," the ancient document says, "are to this time dedicated in his honour." Logie-Mar is now Logie Coldstone; it is about nineteen miles from the Newton Stone. The ancient church and parish of Tumeth or Dumeth are now incorporated in the parish of Glass. The name Dumeth is retained in the farm where the old church was; the old church was immemorially called Walakirk, and the modern chapel-of-ease

on the site is still so called. Walakirk is about fourteen or fifteen miles from the Newton Stone. The three places are the points of an isosceles triangle, Logie Coldstone being the apex, to the south.

The saying still goes

Walok Fair in Logie Mar  
Thirtieth of Januar,

the day of death and the day in the Calendars being the twenty-ninth. Outside the enclosure of the church of Logie is St Wallach's Stone, a rough monolith without sculpture or inscription, a photograph of which (Plate LII) we owe to the kindness of the Reverend R. Robertson, the Minister of the parish, who has also supplied the interesting information in the next paragraphs. As has been said already, Logie Coldstone is some nineteen miles from Inch.

An old lady over eighty has given the Minister the following information as to what used to take place in her childhood on the day of St Woloch's Fair. There was considerable difficulty in understanding the old lady's pronunciation of unusual words.

There were games of all kinds, athletic sports, shooting competitions, and throwing the dice for portions of an ox or a pig killed and divided for the purpose. The dicing took place in the farm-house of Kirktown of Logie, and the proceedings wound up with a dance in the evening at the neighbouring farm of Mains of Logie.

The first person who was interred in (? entered) the churchyard of Logie after the Fair was known as St Woloch's "collab." That is as near as the Minister could make out the old lady's indistinct pronunciation of the word. She explained it to mean that he was guardian warden or keeper of the churchyard for the current year. An interred body would not be an active warden.

It seems probable that this was a delightful survival of a very ancient idea and of the use of a very ancient word. The great saints had successors or representatives in high office, known as comarbs. There was at Iona a long succession of high officials called St Columba's comarbs. St Patrick, too, had comarbs. A Vicar was known as a comarb, and a Vicarage as the comarbachd. The *m* was an *mh*, whence we have *coarb* used as well as *comarb* in the lists. In the early Irish stories the name appears as Corbe, presumably phonetic; I do not find Corbe in Irish or Scoto-gaelic dictionaries.

Thus we suggest that a third generation back they had at Logie Coldstone a very interesting method of selecting St Woloch's Comarb each year. Our suggestion that the old lady meant "entered," and not "interred in," is supported by a further reminiscence of hers. If the first person interred after the Fair was stout, the autumn crop would be good; if thin, meagre.

The affix Coldstone is in itself very interesting. The old name in the Register of Aberdeen is Codelstone, no doubt from Codaile, an assembly, a

conventus; "Logie the place of the Assembly Stone." We may perhaps presume that St Woloch's stone was the Assembly Stone; but there were other marked stones in the neighbourhood, especially the Tomachar Stone, with its rare symbol, now in the grounds of Tillypronie House, see Plate LII.

But the chief site of St Wallach's dwelling, and the chief points personally connected with him, are nearer to Inch by some miles. We have there not only St Wallach's Church, but also St Wallach's Well, and St Wallach's Bath. The church, as we have seen, is now in the parish of Glass. To the Reverend W. G. Guthrie, the Minister of Glass, our best thanks are due for his valuable and friendly help and company on our visit to this charming glen of the upper Deveron.

A memorial window was placed in the parish church of Glass during the war. One of the lights is devoted to Saint Wallach. The artist, Mr Douglas Strachan, R.S.A., shews him baptising a convert at the river side, the wife and child standing near. The thatched hut of the tradition appears on one side. St Andrew is the dedication Saint of Glass; but St Wallach was the dedication Saint of the old parish now incorporated in Glass, Dumeth or Tumeth, and the people of Glass are glad to have St Wallach, their historic neighbour, associated with their own St Andrew.

The church of the old parish of Dumeth, which is now of the nature of a "chapel of ease," is modern. The only relic of St Wallach's old church is the baptismal font, kept in a curious little enclosure in the churchyard, the key of which is in the hands of the Roman Catholic priest at Huntley, the Gordons retaining their ancient family claim to relics of the pre-Reformation church. The modern church retains its old name of Wallakirk. It is about two miles from Glass, further up the Deveron.

The enclosure of the Wallakirk overhangs the river Deveron. Down at the water's edge is St Wallach's Well. A little further up the river is the remarkable double pool in the solid rock above the level of the Deveron, known as St Wallach's Bath. It is very romantically situated, and the water has curative properties. So fresh is the old Wallach tradition, that at a recent baptism the father of the infant went down to the Bath and brought the water to the kirk for the baptism. There is a fascinating climb up from the Deveron and the Bath, by a steep and slippery path through the trees in the grounds of Beldorney Castle. The owners of that ancient and interesting building will take great care of the treasures in their charge. We owe to Lady Birkett our thanks for grateful hospitality, and for the valuable information which is the basis of the following paragraphs.

We have remarked in connection with the possibility of the last letters of the Greek inscription on the Newton Stone being the representation of *πρεσβύτερος*, that it would be a great support if we could find any trace of the Saint

being called "Priest." The legend makes him a bishop. In the course of our enquiries about the possibility of a foot track from Beldorney to Inch, especially by the route of a water-way down the intervening high ground, Lady Birkett told of a burn on the way to Gartly called the "Priest's Water," and added that very near the Castle there is also the "Priest's drinking well," up the burn, all paved with stones. This is the link we desired to find.

The track in the direction of Inch leaves Beldorney by the Craigs of Succoth and mounts to Corshalloch. A water runs down from Corshalloch to Bridgend on the Bogie. From Bridgend the Saint would go up the Bogie and turn east to Inch. The fact that it is not known where he died may suggest that he died away from home. Some faithful follower chipped out our two Greek lines on a stone at the place where he died and was buried.

Besides Tumeth and Logie-Mar, tradition includes Strathdon and Balveny among St Wallach's churches. There is no tradition or trace of any church at Balvenie. Balvenie Castle is an old ruin of a fortress of the Athole Stewarts, to the north of Mortlach. It is only about nine miles in a direct line westwards from Beldorney, so that St Wallach we may be sure had been there; but neither at Balvenie nor at Mortlach is there any tradition which connects his name with the locality.

It seems probable that the tradition of the dedication of "the church of Strathdon" to St Wallach really means "a church in Strathdon." I am assured that the place called Strathdon is not an ancient place, certainly not an ancient ecclesiastical place. The only "Strathdon" known in earlier times was the fertile Strath in which the Don ran and runs. The parish now called Strathdon was called Invernochty two hundred years ago. It is probably important, in this connection, that the tradition is that the people of the district of Strathdon nearest to Logie-Mar, that is, the Logie Coldstone where St Wallach's Stone is, used to cross the hills to Logie-Mar for Mass. The Ordnance Map makes the church of Coldstone lie about ten miles on a good road from the place called Strathdon.

With regard to the possible date of Saint Volocus, it must be remarked that assignments of date where there is no definite historical connection need great caution and at best are doubtful. The local tradition at Glass puts him in the fifth century.

We have an entry in the Aberdeen document to the following effect:—"More than 400 years after our Lord had suffered for us, the blessed Volocus the Bishop, a distinguished confessor of Christ, is said to have flourished with many miracles in the northern part of Scotia." That may be taken to mean something a year or two later than A.D. 430. The condition of faith and morals among the people to whom he ministered is described as exceedingly bad. A phrase is used which introduces two words very familiar to us in our present



inquiries, "they had neither altar nor temple." One is tempted to add the words "as even the pagans there had." Bishop Forbes remarks that the bad condition of affairs indicates the time "when St Celestine sent Palladius first to the Scots in Ireland and then to Pictland." That was soon after A.D. 430. The mission of Ninian to the Picts was a little earlier; his life probably extended from 360 to 432. He built his stone church, *Candida Casa*, at Whithorn in Wigtonshire in A.D. 397; for this we have a historical evidence, he heard of the death of his friend St Martin of Tours when he was building his church.

The connection of both of these missions with Gaul was exceedingly close. That one of the missionaries should be acquainted with and accustomed to the use of Greek letters is very probable. We can scarcely be wrong in preferring this explanation of the existence of a memorial inscription in Greek letters to the alternative supposition that it is due to a Columbite or post-Columbite influence.

The assertion of a later date is comparatively modern. One David Camerarius, in his book *De Scotorum Fortitudine*, published in Paris in 1631, places the death in 732, and gives the mission as at *Candida Casa* (said to mean Braemar!) as well as at Balveny, Strathdon, and Mar; but on what grounds he rejects the earlier and apparently more probable date we do not know. It is needless to say that his own authority has no original force.

Adame King published a Kalendar at Paris in 1588. He usually gives dates, not infrequently fanciful dates, but for Saint Volocus he does not give a date. His entry is,—“29 January. S. Makwolk, bischop in Scotland.” His next entry gives a date,—“31 January. S. Modoche bischop in Scotland under Crathlintus King, A.D. 318.”

We may conclude these various extracts from old sources with a translation from a Latin entry in the “Martyrology for the use of the Church of Aberdeen,” shewing how fresh the memory of our Saint was in early pre-Reformation days:—“29 January. In Scotland at Dummeth in the diocese of Aberdeen, Saint Volocus, Bishop and Confessor. The Church at that place is dedicated to him. The more devotedly his memory is celebrated in that church, the more does the wicked overcome evil.”

All this points vividly to a great mark made by a remarkable man. At the outset the Breviary states that he was a foreigner. Our conclusion is that he had a foreign epitaph, on the Stone now called the Newton Stone.

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We may now remove the third and sixth lines of minuscule script from our purview, and deal with the ogams and the remaining four lines of minuscule. It can scarcely be by mere accident that the removal of the two lines of Greek leaves 27 minuscules, and the ogam digits are also 27, though not all

investigators agree exactly with that counting. There is however so slight a difference in the numeration that we may fairly proceed on the supposition that the ogam and the minuscule are the same in meaning until we come to clear proof to the contrary.

It seems worth while to note the rapid development in the knowledge of ogam script between 1856, when Dr Stuart wrote, and 1890 when I ventured to suggest a solution of the whole difficulty. This is what Dr Stuart wrote:—

“The groups of short lines which are cut on the left edge of the stone, and partially on its surface, are believed to form an inscription in the Ogham character; but of this character little that is satisfactory has as yet been determined.”

At the time of my lecture, almost the whole of the ogam inscription was as easily read as English, and any remaining difficulty was entirely due to the unevenness of the surface. Countless ogam inscriptions had been read in Ireland, many in Wales, and books had been written on the subject.

It has been noted that we spell the word ogam without an *h* in the middle. With the *h* following the *g*, the word would be pronounced in Irish or Scottish Gaelic like the *ome* in the word “home.”

My illustration<sup>1</sup> is taken by photography from a rubbing made in 1889, with the help of Mr Gordon of Newton, which only gives so much of the ogam as lies along the stone opposite the minuscules. The fact that it is from a rubbing ensures the accuracy of relative position. It is important to state that when I outlined the rubbing I had no idea what the inscription meant.

If the minuscules were as easy to read as the ogams, we should have no difficulty. The ogams we read as follows:—

aiddaiqn timerenni x uaioisii.

This assumes that the inscription runs on continuously when the stem-line turns upwards at the bottom of the stone, and that after the stem-line turns up, the digits are arranged on the two sides of the stem-line exactly as they would have been if the stem-line had gone on without turning up. That seems a matter of course; but after all, if it had not been so, the only change would have been a hard *c* in place of the *s*. We take the cross to be a sign whose meaning we do not even guess at; a cross is the ogam diphthong *ea*. Further, we read the sixth ogam digit as *i*, although the five lines do undoubtedly appear to be on the slant, as do also the five lines of the final digit. A close personal examination of the stone suggests that the contour of the surface is responsible for the slant.

<sup>1</sup> Plate XL.

Dr Stuart in his "Sculptured Stones," vol. i, Plate II, gives three very faint ogam scores against the first *r* in *forren*. Dr Joseph Anderson in his "Scotland in early Christian times," page 219, gives in the same place these three scores as clear as the other ogams. They are not on any stem-line, and apparently must mean that a digit has been omitted. They read as *t*, and if inserted in the place where they are, we have *fortren* instead of *forren*. The most recent plate of the inscription omits these faint scores; but my visit in 1920, when the railings were removed for my inspection and I fingered the stone, shewed that however faint they are there. If our photographic representation of the ogam inscription is examined with a magnifying glass, the three scores shew faintly<sup>1</sup>. The recent plate omits the first letter, *a*, which was there when I took my rubbing in 1889, and I think it is there still, however faint; it reads the cross as *p*; and it slopes the two final digits more than I think they are sloped, and thus makes them mean *rr*.

To bring the ogam reading into exact correspondence with the minuscule we propose to interchange two of the words. We may forestall our explanation of the inscription by the remark that this interchange is precisely the same thing as writing "Sweden's King" instead of "King of Sweden."

We therefore set forth the ogam inscription thus:—

aiddai fortrenni qnnn ua iosii.

The first word is the name of the person commemorated, whether in the nominative, or in the genitive with "this is the memorial of" understood. We note that in some modern Gaelic words *ai* appears to be pronounced as short *e*; we return to this later.

The second word is the name of his or her district, the well-known division of Caledonian Pictland named Fortren, corresponding with the modern Strath-earn and Menteith.

The third word, giving the *q* its full and proper form, is *gunnin*, probably *kunning*; or *guninn* with the well-known duplication of the final *n* as in Eddarnonn. It is said that in old Irish *nn* is equivalent to *ng*. The word evidently represents some form of our word *king*, the old Irish *Cinn*, the modern Scots *Conyng*.

The fourth word is the ordinary *ua*, "of the race of." It is the Irish preposition for "from," "out of." It corresponds to the modern *O'*, as in O'Neil, which is also a preposition, the survival of *bho*, "from."

<sup>1</sup> We have an interesting example of an inserted letter above a name in one of the small tomb stones at Hartlepool. The only inscription was the name of the deceased nun, Hildigith. In pronunciation the *g* would become a slurred *y*, and thus would not be recognised as a letter by the mason who took the order by word of mouth for the one name, probably well known in the monastery. The eye of the Prioress caught the mistake. A round hole was drilled in the space where the *g* ought to have been, and the *g* rune was incised above the line.

The fifth word is the name of the ancestor, or possibly the ancestress.

The whole meaning is

"The memorial stone of ? Aed, King or Ruler of Fortren, of the race of ? Ios."

Turning now to the minuscule, we read the first word as *Ette*, the name of the person commemorated. As we have seen, *ai* is in gaelic sometimes pronounced as a short *e*. I make *Ette* and *Aiddai* the same word. In the Index to Dr W. F. Skene's book of the Chronicles of the Picts and of the Scots, we have a list of alternative forms of the name Aed, which was originally the name of a fire goddess. The list is as follows:—Aed, Edh, Aedus, Athe. A corresponding list in the Index of Dr Plummer's two volumes on the Saints of Hibernia is longer and still more convincing:—Aed, Ed, Aid, Aidus, Aedh, Aedus, Aidus, Edus. It is evident that Aid and Ed were the same name, and that *Aiddai* and *Ette* are the same word.

The second word we read as *furtrenus*. A very close examination of the concluding letters of this word, which wander away beyond the field of the general inscription, fails to justify the *e*. But so many of the letters are illuminated by the corresponding ogam *fortren* that we cannot resist the claim of sameness.

The third word introduces the curious svastika-like character which stands out in the middle of the stone. To those of us who are familiar with the curious beflagging of the rune  $\chi$  it seems reasonable to read this as *ch*, and we read the word *urchn*. This may mean the "superior," or "lord." A Scot's laird is now *uachdaran* in gaelic. My gaelic advisers seem to make light of the difference between *urch* and *uach*; and how far a Pictish cutter of minuscules spelled philologically or phonetically we cannot say. It is rather curious that I do find in O'Donovan's Irish dictionary that *urc* is a king. In phonetic spelling and in other respects there are curious parallelisms between the bilingual biliteral Newton Stone and the Codex Bezae, a Gallican bilingual in Greek and Latin of the sixth century<sup>1</sup>.

The next word is our weak link. It appears to read *Elisi*. Thirty years ago, after working at the stone with Mr Gordon of Newton, I wrote to ask him to examine the word again; I could not accept the long bottom stroke; I suggested that the front part of it was a prostrate *i*, at the foot of a capital *F*, the first *i* in *Fili* being so often put in curious places in Welsh and other inscriptions. He replied that I was so far right that the beginning of the long stroke is in fact merely a vein of white quartz in the stone; but he thought the remaining part really joined on to the vertical line. A close examination this year does not enable me to dispute this. But here again the ogam gives illumination. The letters here correspond with the ogam *ua*, "descendant of," and we claim that they represent *Fili*. But the

<sup>1</sup> "A study of Codex Bezae," by J. Rendel Harris. *Texts and Studies*: Cambridge University Press.

inscription begins with *Ette furtrenus*, Ette of Fortren, certainly not *furtreni*. Curiously enough this is the one word which the wise men of Cambridge read definitely, Mr Wright read it *Filius*. The next letter is *i*, and the next word in the ogam begins with *i*. I therefore read *Filis* for *Filius*. Any one who reads such spellings of Latin as we find, for instance, in the Bobbio Missal, may be grateful that so small a mistake as the omission of a *u* is all we find here. But I now go further than I did thirty years ago. This word represents the ogam *ua*, "of the descendants of." The *F* and the prostrate *i* give us *Filis*; but they also give us *E*. I suggest that we have here, monogrammatically, all the details of *E Filis*, for *E filiis*, "of the descendants of."

The concluding word is read in many ways. It is at least a very fair parallel to the ogam *iosii* or *iosrr*.

That is our attempt to solve the unsolvable problem.

The guess at the name Aed may have some substance. We have twelve or more of that name in the Annals of the Picts and Scots. The three most prominent are Aed, son of Boanta, king of Dalriada; Aed, son of Kenneth, king of the Scots, whose name is variously spelled as Edh, Athe, etc.; and Aeda king of Dalriada, whose name is variously spelled, usually in combination with *fin*, "the white." The district of Fortren is curiously connected with one and another of these Aeds. It was originally a Pictish division of Caledonia, as we have seen. The chronicles record fights in Fortren, and they appear to shew that the kings of Dalriada, the district of the west which was the home of the Caledonian Scots, had sway in Fortren at certain times and were called kings of Fortren. They appear to shew also that the kings of the Caledonian Picts had conquered Dalriada, and that it was they who were called kings of Fortren. It is impossible to speak more positively, because a certain king Alpin, who was succeeded by kings of his race, is by the later of the two chronicles brought down from about A.D. 741 to about a hundred years later and made identical with the Alpin whose son Kenneth mac Alpin united the Picts and Scots into one kingdom. Aed, son of Kenneth, ruled for one year, and was slain in 878, by his own people according to one chronicle. He and his three predecessors were called *reges Pictorum* although they were Scot by race. Evidently they were regarded as having ascended the Pictish throne. The place of his death is described as *Nrurim* in the Pictish Chronicle. The name *Nrurim* would presumably have a vowel as a first letter, and accordingly we find as other readings *Inverurin* and *Inuriu*<sup>1</sup>. It is a remarkable fact that

<sup>1</sup> We may give, for what it may be worth, what Chalmers says of this king (*Caledonia*, i. 581) Aedh, Hugh, or Eth, surnamed "of the swift foot." 'It was his misfortune to reign when Grig was Maormor (ruler or earl) of the extensive country between Dee and Spey. He raised up a competitor, with a faction, to oppose the king. They met at Strathalan, a bloody field. Aedh was wounded, and died two months after at Inverurin.'

at Inverurie the mound called the Conyng Hillock is by tradition said to be so called because "King Eth of the swift foot is buried there." Newton is some ten or eleven miles direct from Inverurie. Eth, with a soft *th*, is the traditional pronunciation of Aedh. Our Plate XLIII shews the Conyng Hillock, which stands a short distance south of the Manse of Inverurie. The New Statistical account stated that the mound is undoubtedly artificial, and that popular belief gives it as the burial place of a Pictish king. There does not appear to be room here for a confusion between king and coney, as in some cases of the occurrence of the name *conygar*, or rabbit-garth, rabbit-warren.

On account of the importance of each step in these suggested identifications, and also because it is a rather interesting little question of palæography, we give a facsimile of the *Edus* passage in the Paris manuscript of the Pictish Chronicle, Plate XXXV. Dr William F. Skene reads it in extension as follows:

Normanni annum integrum degerunt in  
Pictavia. Edus tenuit idem i.  
anno. Ejus etiam brevitās nil historie memorabile  
commendavit : sed in civitate Nrurim est  
occisus. Eochodius autem filius Run

[regis Britanorum nepos Cinadei ex filia regnavit annis XI.]

The reason for the divergence of readings of the place of Aed's death is obvious. Dr Skene appears to have taken the mark of the *i* attached to the second *r* as an indication that it is to be read as a compound letter, *ri*, and that gives him a final *m*; it looks more like *in* than *m*. The *nr* at the beginning is ingenious, but open to question. Still, *nrurim* appears to be the least open to objection of the several readings proposed.

A slight examination of the five lines suffices to make it clear that the manuscript is careless. The *n* and the *u* in *tenuit*, and the *m* in *Normāni* and in *memo*, are warnings. There are in the manuscript several evidences that the scribe did not copy correctly, and that the Latin from which he copied was a translation from an Irish or early Gaelic Chronicle compiled by the monks of Brechin in the reign of Kenneth II. He succeeded in 977<sup>1</sup>, and thus the Brechin monks were writing only a hundred years after the violent death of their king. Kenneth died in 995, before which time the Chronicle was finished. It may well have been that this part of the Chronicle was written before Kenneth succeeded, but in any case the violent death of Aedh was certainly in full memory among his people.

The place of death was up in the north, beyond the great mountains. Its name would reach Brechin, and be handed on by tradition for the hundred years, phonetically. Taking it to be Inverurie, where *urie* is the geographical

<sup>1</sup> A more recent authority says 971.

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Popes Celestine III (1195) and Innocent III (1198)  
and Earl David (1202-6) spell Inverurie as Inverurin.





part, a first stage of decay would be Innerurie. Those of us who have lived for years in Scotland are familiar with the place-names Innerpeffry, Innernethy. In the early charters and registers we find Innergowry, Innernochty. In a *Taxacio ecclesiarum per episcopum Aberdonensem* about 700 years ago, we find Inverurie itself written Innerowry. In a four-syllable word, where the third syllable is *ur*, the weak second syllable is clipped, and the word is pronounced *Inrurie*. This is pronounced in clipped speech as Nrurie. That is quite near enough to be the word mis-copied as we find it in the Chronicle. It may fairly be called a support of the abstract argument, that I find the place Inveramsay, three miles from Inverurie, spelled in a late document Inramsay.

It is always interesting to get behind an ancient manuscript, and find the writer, and realise his conditions and motives.

This manuscript was written at York by Brother Robert of Poppleton, as we are told by the writer himself. It is a manuscript of the 14th century. In 1334 the Archbishop of York, William de Melton A.D. 1316-40, mentions William of Poppleton as in charge of his Hospitium. Poppleton is a village two or three miles out of York, up the Ouse, on the way to Scotland. Why should Robert, or the head of the York *scriptorium*, or the Archbishop of York, be anxious to have a copy of this most ancient chronicle of the Picts and Scots?

Their fellow-Northumbrian Bede had told them of the terrible inroads of the Picts and Scots and their danger to York. A Picto-Scotic king had got within forty miles of York two centuries before their time, and had only been stopped in his course by St Peter of York and his fellow Saints of Ripon and Durham<sup>1</sup>. During all the life of men of early middle age the north country had rung with the strife between the great Yorkshire Bruce of Skelton Castle and the great Durham Balliol of Barnard Castle as to which of them was the truer heir of these same Picto-Scotic kings. They had seen the Stone of Destiny brought down on its way to Westminster. About the date of the manuscript, Douglas and Randolph, Bruce's paladins, plundered York. William de Merton the Archbishop raised a host, caught them up at Myton, 20 miles straight up the river from Poppleton, and there suffered terrible defeat, hundreds of his white-robed priests being drowned in Swale. Well might Drayton sing

The lands that over Ouse to Berwick north do beare  
Have for their blazon had the snafle spur and speare.

They had indeed reason to be even more deeply interested in the ancestry of the Picts and Scots than in their own ancestry.

We cannot leave the Pictish Chronicle without a concluding remark.

<sup>1</sup> The Battle of the Standard, A.D. 1138.

After giving long lists of kings, the compilers begin their account of the doings of the kings with Kenneth mac Alpin, A.D. 836, and end it, as we have seen, with Kenneth II in 994. Their first statement is intensely un-Pictish. It is, that Kenneth mac Alpin destroyed the Picts, God having abandoned them because they scorned the Mass and the teaching of the Lord and would not recognise others as their equals<sup>1</sup>. This comes from the monks of Brechin. It is not a Pictish Chronicle. A Pictish chronicler would scarcely have sent down to posterity a statement that some two and a half centuries after Columba's first interview with Brude, king of the Picts, the Picts were still haughty pagans, and therefore were deleted. The spirit said to be shewn by them was the spirit of full-flavoured Druidism. On the other hand, it can scarcely have been a complete invention of the monks of Brechin. It points to that compromise between Druidism and Christianity, Priest and Magician, which has been suggested in these pages.

A long search through lists and indexes of Celtic names has not succeeded in discovering a likely correspondence with the ogam name *iosii*. Considering the Pictish principle of mother-right, and the race jealousies of Picts and Scots, the suggestion is at least not inappropriate, that in this specially Pictish part of Caledonia the name of some important Pictish ancestress is here given, in assertion of Aed's claim to be rightfully ruler of Fortren. On the other hand, if this was a hostile attack upon the Pictish province by its Dalriad sovereign, his Hibernian ancestry may have been asserted on his memorial stone. On this point it seems on the face of it not to matter much whether we end the word with a double *i* or a double *r*.

There has been some slight personal interest to the writer in the attempt to connect Eth of the swift foot with this much disputed inscription. He was the uncle of the writer's children thirty-three generations ago, through his brother King Constantine I, as many thousands of people can say of themselves.

<sup>1</sup> non solum Domini missam ac preceptum spreverunt, sed et in jure equitatis aliis equi parari noluerunt.

## CHAPTER XI

### *The Pictish Sculptured Stones.*

Remarkable figures incised on rude stones.—The Maiden Stone.—The Brandsbutt Stone.—Who were the Picts?—Herodotus and dog-men.—Jerome.—Sacrifice and cannibalism.—The Picts.—The name Pict.—Carvers.—Tattoo.—Among the Saxons.—Territory occupied by Picts.—Union with Scots.—Sculptures on dressed stones.—Figures transferred from tattoo.—The combination with the Christian Cross.—The several figures and symbols.—The Elephant.—The Crescent.—The Spectacles.—Origin of the three symbols.—The Pitfour Stone.—The Centaurs.—The sacred tree.—The Serpents.—Possible dates.—The Earl of Southesk's theory.—Possible origin of the combination of Christian and pagan religious symbols.

ANOTHER striking feature of the remains of ancient times in this part of Aberdeenshire is found in the fact that we have here many examples of the early Pictish figures incised on rude stones. These we must take to be the ancestors, it may be far off ancestors, of the carefully dressed and shaped slabs of stone on which the figures are so wonderfully and beautifully displayed elsewhere in the old parts of Caledonia. Examples of these curious figures, some of them describable as unique, are given on Plates XLIV—LIII. While there are, as we have said, large numbers of examples here on rude stones, there is only one example in this district of the dressed stones which are so abundant in Forfar and Perth, namely, the Maiden Stone in Garioch. Even that one is unlike any other of its class, except that it has upon it a fine example of the "elephant" symbol and the mirror and comb. The name "Maiden Stone" has led to the invention of various stories to account for its erection; but probably "Maiden" represents some ancient gaelic word or words. The Maiden Stone is shewn on Plate LVI and described on page 152.

A fine example of the Pictish symbols on a rude stone will be seen on Plate XLI, the Brandsbutt Stone, where two of the symbols we are about to describe are seen.

Who the Picts were, and what was their old home and their national name, are questions to which various answers are given.

The historian Herodotus, writing about B.C. 450, knew of course nothing about our islands. But he knew that there was a race of men in the northern parts of Europe, who lived even further west than the Celts of whom he wrote. Archæological investigations shew that though he did not know of our islands, his statement did in fact cover them. The extreme people of whom he wrote occupied the western fringe of Gaul, and these islands. As we may have some of their blood in our veins, it is a little difficult to discuss without prejudice the name which he gives to this people, Kynesii (ii. 33) and Kynetes (iv. 49). Other people tell us that this means *dog-men*. What that may possibly mean

we may gather from a statement of Jerome, about 370 A.D. He was at Trèves, the city which shared with York the honour of being the capital city of the empire north of the Alps. He saw among the troops collected there a body of men who were fed on human flesh. These appear to have been Atecotti, the people between the two walls, specially the people on the Solway. Secular historians before Jerome have an uncomfortable way of saying that the inhabitants of the interior of Britain were cannibals, and their matrimonial arrangements resembled those of herds of cattle. The theory of recent writers appears to be that the gradual growth of Celtic immigration pushed the primaeval Picts into the north-eastern parts of Caledonia, north of the Grampians.

It would be very difficult to maintain that our early ancestors or predecessors in the parts of this island which we now call England were less savage in the times of their full savagery than these Kynetes were, or than the most barbarous savages are now. The late Dr Thurnam in his address on Ancient British Barrows (*Archæologia*, xiii. 185, A.D. 1867-8) gave the following facts:—Among heaps of human remains I have found one skull unmutilated and all the rest cloven with some blunt weapon. This might be an accident of war; but examples are so frequent as to exclude the theory of accident. The cleft skulls are those of victims immolated on the occasion of the burial of a chief.

Pliny, speaking of the human sacrifices of Gaul, and Britain, observes that the transition from sacrificing to eating is easy, *paullum a mandendo abest*, vii. 2.

The late William Greenwell concluded from the disjointed, cleft, and broken condition of the human bones in many of the long barrows that we have the indications of funeral feasts, where slaves, captives, and others, were slain and eaten. The bones could not have been displaced as they are if the flesh had not been removed before the bones were buried.

It has often been suggested, and it seems quite probable, that savage races believe that they get into their bodies the strength and courage of those whom they kill and eat, as they get nourishment from fruits and birds and animals which they eat. The flesh of the lion is still eaten with this object in view.

Bede's account of the coming of the Picts is well known. I may summarise the account from my *Venerable Bede*<sup>1</sup>.

The Britons had the island of Britain to themselves. After a time, some Picts from Scythia, in long ships, were blown to the coast of Ireland, then occupied by the Scots. The Scots had no room for them, and advised them to take possession of a land they saw in clear weather to the north-east. The Picts took their advice and occupied the land, which became known as Caledonia.

They had no women with them, and they visited Ireland again to seek wives. The Scots supplied them, making the condition that in memory of this

<sup>1</sup> S.P.C.K., 1919.

gift, if doubt arose about succession to the throne, they should take the son of a female member of the royal family in preference to the son of a male member. The system of mother-right became the rule among them.

The interpreters of Bede naturally have to understand that Bede's Scythia, from which they came in ships, must have been some Scandinavian land. The tenth century Pictish Chronicle<sup>1</sup>, 250 years later, takes it as the historical Scythia, and traces the course of the emigrants from the neighbourhood of India across Europe by the Caspian, the Caucasus, and Germany.

We take the name "Pict" from Latin sources. It seems probable that the spelling of the name is due to the attempt of Roman writers, like Claudian who actually saw the Picts, to represent by the hard *c* a guttural sound. The idea of its meaning the "painted" people should probably be abandoned. The people of south Britain stained their skin with woad in Julius Cæsar's time. But Claudian tells us that the Picts pricked in with an iron tool the figures on their bodies that so greatly struck the Roman soldiery.

A possible root which might be represented by the Latin sound of Pict would make them the "carvers." Nothing could better describe the astonishing remains they have left in Caledonia, strange figures carved on rude stones in the district we are considering; later, carved on dressed stones with a wealth of detail unrivalled in other parts of the world. A silent folk, who—as we have seen<sup>2</sup>—only once broke silence on their marvellous monuments, and then in such beautiful lettering that we wish we had more of it. If an opinion must be hazarded, we may on the whole suppose that they were off-shoots from the pre-Aryan folk who are spoken of as the Mediterranean race.

We must not treat the Pictish tattoo as something with which the English had nothing to do, though it is true that there was no beauty in the English tattoo. In the year 787 two papal legates, George and Theophylact, made to Pope Hadrian a Report of their proceedings in England<sup>3</sup>. They had issued twenty chapters of instructions, the nineteenth of which dealt with pagan practices which they ordered the English to abandon. The first of these was the practice of scoring scars on the body, and tincturing it. This pagan practice they describe as most foul. To emphasise its foulness they declare that if any one sustained such injurious treatment for the love of God, he would deserve a great reward. We may fairly say that this scarring was not what had earned the admiration of the Roman soldier of Stilicho's army when he had struck down a Pictish foe and gazed on the figures tattooed upon the body. The Anglo-Saxon fop tattooed himself in late Anglo-Saxon times.

Skene, in his *Celtic Scotland*, iii. 17, says that the Picts occupied the whole country north of Forth and Clyde, and also Galloway and a considerable

<sup>1</sup> H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Page 108.

<sup>3</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, *Concilia*, iii. 447-462.

part of Ireland<sup>1</sup>. They appear to have been short dark men with markedly square shoulders. At the time of the junction of the Picts with the Scots of the west coast and the isles, Pictland was much the larger territory. The seats of the kings of the joint kingdoms were in Pictland, not in Argyll and the Isles. The names of the first joint king, Kenneth mac Alpin, were Pictish names; they appear in the Pictish lists, not in the Scottish<sup>2</sup>. Whether at the time of the junction the Picts outnumbered the Scots we do not know. Which is now the prevailing type is a matter of opinion.

We have in the Chronicles of the Picts the names of the territories allotted to the seven sons of Cruithne. Five of the seven names survived to later times, and we are able to state the parts of modern Scotland to which the names correspond. They are Fib (Fife and Forthreve); Fortrenn (Fortreen, i.e. Strathearn and Menteith); Fodla (Athfoitli, i.e. Atholl and Gowrie); Circenn (Maghcircin, i.e. Mearns and Angus); Cait (Caithness). The other sons were Fidach and Ce; they do not survive in any territorial denomination; but it is evident that a large area of territory remains to be accounted for, and especially the parts we are most concerned with, Mar and Buchan and Moray.

Without going into too much detail, we can state generally in what parts of the districts mentioned we have specimens of the work of the Picts as "carvers."

If you draw a line north-east and south-west through Crieff, parallel to the general lie of the sea-coast, you will include between your line and the sea all but one of the Sculptured Stones of Pictish character other than those in Moray. The one exception is the very remarkable stone at Dunfallandy, which has unique features.

The Sculptured Stones in Moray, using that name in its widest sense, are all of them on or not far from the shores of the sea and its creeks, from Golspie in the north to Elgin, Duffus, and Drainie.

The Roman historical poet Claudian, who accompanied the Roman general Stilicho in his invasion of Caledonia about A.D. 400, tells us that when the Roman soldier struck down a Pict, he stood over him scanning the figures marked with iron on his body,

ferroque notatas  
Perlegit exsanguis Picto moriente figuras.

The simplest theory of the remarkable sculptures on stone in Pictish Caledonia, is, that when the Christian teachers came, they told the Picts they must clothe themselves decently. The Picts would naturally object to shew no longer their fascinating art-patterns and figures of men and horses and

<sup>1</sup> He says elsewhere the north of Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> See fuller information in our remarks on the Newton Stone.

hounds. The missionary would reply that these should be transferred to stones, as no doubt had already been the case, and that on the face of a stone slab, whether a memorial stone, or a boundary stone, or a celebration stone, there should be engraven a great cross, in the formation of which their most intricate patterns of interlacement should be used. To occupy the vacant spaces on the slab at the sides of these great crosses, they might put dragons and other creatures tied up and fettered as though by the power of the Cross. On the back of the stone they could put any of their figures.

An examination of Plates LIV and LV will give a general idea of the beauty of the interlacing patterns in the panels of the crosses, and those Plates will shew in abundance the "figures" of which Claudian wrote. We must suppose that the priestly officials who performed the function of tatooing the chieftains were wise enough to use stencil plates, for a mistake in the outline of a horse might cost the official his life. Those same stencil plates were no doubt used to transfer the figures to the stones. When a sculptured slab is so broken that we can see the bottom of the incised groove, we find a continuous series of pricks, shewing that the groove was made by a series of drill-holes, the walls between the drill-holes being knocked away. The fractured edge of the broken stone looks like a piece of honey-comb.

Besides the mirror and comb, the fish, the transfixed serpent, and the men, horses, and hounds, the three special Pictish "symbols" will be found in one or other of the Plates, the "elephant," the "crescent," and the "spectacles." These are found also on rude stones in our district<sup>1</sup>. Fifty years ago, of 67 undressed stones with the symbols and 43 dressed stones with the symbols, 57 of the undressed and 16 of the dressed stones were north of the Dee, the large majority of the undressed stones being in our district. The number of examples on undressed stones discovered in the district has largely increased since then, while I do not know of any fresh discovery of an example of the great dressed stones in the district.

To take first the "elephant." There are four marked features in all the examples on our stones. The trunk rises out of the top of the head, the jaws are very large and long, there are no tusks, and the legs end in a rounded scroll. I was crediting the rounded scroll to Pictish inability to draw an elephant's foot, to a lady who had intimate acquaintance with such things as elephants and alligators<sup>2</sup>. But no!, my hostess said, that is the special characteristic of the elephant's walk. His knees are where our ankles are, and he rolls his foot round behind him as he walks, as we roll round behind us the part of the leg below the knee and lift it to bring it forward for the next step. An interview with the keeper of the elephants in the Regent's Park brought out quite clearly the correctness of the Pictish representations.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Countess of Suffolk.

Two further points emerged from this interview. My hostess had told me that twice round the elephant's fore foot was the height of the elephant. I looked at the foot. Seeing was disbelieving. But the keeper assured me that twice round the fore foot is the height of the elephant, measured to the highest point in the middle of the back. Whether it would be true of the African elephant, he was prepared to doubt, for the highest point of the African elephant is at the shoulder, and his feet are not the same as the Indian elephant's feet; they are one toe short on each foot, four toes in front and three behind, instead of the Indian's five and four. But the books tell us that the law of twice round the fore foot is true of the African also. The fact that the African elephant's shoulder is his highest point, the back sloping slightly downwards towards the tail instead of rising in a great rounded curve, makes it clear that all of the Pictish elephants are African, not Indian. This is natural, with an ancient race of early Mediterranean origin, or if the Picts learned the shape of the elephant from the Romans with their long experience of Carthage. That is one point that emerges. The other is very curious. It affects the size of the foot,—twice round the fore foot is the animal's height. The best Pictish elephant in our Plates for the purpose of examining into this point is fig. 1 of Plate XLVIII, the elephant on one of the Logie Elphinstone stones. It is also far the best of all in the solid drawing of the trunk, if we disregard the little trunk coming out of the top of its head, conceivably an attempt of the carver to shew two attitudes in one picture. In this sketch we have the round foot rolled back, better than in other cases. Taking the foot to have been circular, we have here the diameter. Twice round a circle is six and a quarter times the diameter. Our Logie Elphinstone elephant bears the test fairly well. Those Pictish carvers were a wonderful folk. We might almost determine the comparative dates of the various Pictish elephants by the degree of their departure from the Logie Elphinstone type.

Fossil remains of the African elephant are found in Spain, and have been attributed to the Pleistocene period, which has been taken as the period of the first appearance of man. Mention of fossil remains of a British elephant will be found in the note at the end of this chapter.

It should be stated that Lord Southesk, in his important book "on the origin of Pictish symbolism," claims that the Pictish "elephant" is in reality a representation of the "sun boar." But when the Pict at St Vigean's desired to shew on a sculptured stone a man shooting a boar with an arrow, the boar's feet are quite well done. "The sacred boar," Lord Southesk says, is "a sign of the sun and of sun worship. This symbol belongs to Frey, one of whose attributes is the boar or hog, Gullinbörste (golden bristle), whose bristled back typifies the rays of the sun." I do not know of any bristled back among all the examples of the Pictish "elephant" symbol, while we have bristled backs of other quadrupeds on the stones.



When we come to speak of the Crescent symbol, we shall find ourselves carried to the Roman Wall in Scotland for possible origins of the symbol from the legionary tablets on the wall of Agricola as completed by Lollius Urbicus, the Atecotti and probably the Picts being respectively the people "between the walls" and north of the wall from Forth to Clyde. The Roman officers in command of the troops whose work it was to erect the wall were men of taste and art, as the discoveries of this century shew. They knew the Roman historians and poets. They were familiar with the appearance of elephants. In Horace's time elephants were so well known in Rome that he created the phrase "a white elephant," *sive elephas albus vulgi converteret ora*<sup>1</sup>. Elephants were exhibited in Rome at the triumph over Pyrrhus, B.C. 276. If Picts were employed at the turf wall, they would hear much about elephants. Polyænus (A.D. 180) tells us that Julius Cæsar had an elephant in Britain. To force the disputed passage of a river, he covered the elephant with sheets of iron, set archers upon him, and drove him in. The natives fled away on horses and chariots. The characteristics of the Pictish symbol are just what the terror-stricken fugitives would report throughout the interior of Britain. My impression is that the outline of the Pictish symbol was based upon a hurried sight of the animal itself.

The next of the three symbols to be considered is the "crescent." There is a good example of this symbol at the top of Plate LIV, where I have filled in some of the interlacing patterns with which the whole surface is ornamented. This, as it seems to me, wrought in gold, would make a very fine arch on the head of a king. As to the jointed pin running through it, if the ornamental heads were taken off, the pin could be passed through the carefully matted hair, run through the slots in the arch, and made safe by screwing on the heads again. The experts call this pin the sceptre. It has, no doubt, a curious resemblance to the jointed double sceptre on the Alfred Jewel, where the sceptre is formed like a pair of tongs, each hand of the king holding one member, the floriated heads shewing clear above each shoulder. Others take it as a capital L, for *Luna*, the Moon. It remains a mystery in its beginning. We refer to this again in dealing with the "spectacles."

To Lord Southesk the crescent is the Sun-Axe symbol; "in form typical of the sun's penetrative power, and of the force of the lightning flash." He regards this as probably the most important among the Pictish symbols; it belonged to Thor, the chief member of the divine Triad. Thor was the sun-god proper; god of the sun in its active aspect; the thunder-god likewise, and thus the wielder of the hammer or axe (named Mjølñir, the crusher) representative of the "thunderbolt." We have, on a stone at Gosforth, a representation of Thor cutting the rope which had caught the Midgard-worm, with

<sup>1</sup> Epist. II. i. 196.

his hammer or axe. It bears no resemblance to the crescent, which is much more like the inverted axe of the guillotine.

We may again turn to the wall of Lollius Urbicus, in the region of the Atecotti and of some portion of the Picts.

In Dr George Macdonald's book, *The Roman Wall in Scotland*, there are several Plates which illustrate the crescent in a manner common in the art of Roman tablets. We have received from Dr Macdonald permission to reproduce some of his illustrations from photographs contributed by Messrs Annan of Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. The four legionary tablets are shewn on our Plates LVII and LVIII. They state the lengths of the Wall made by various sections of the second and sixth legions.

The crescents stand out in all of these examples as a leading feature of the ornament. Those in no. 1 of Plate LVII are very graceful, the two crescents included in each giving a highly decorative effect. There is a great falling off in no. 2 of that Plate, where a queer-looking bird's head is given as a finish to each horn; it should be noticed that the crescent itself is divided centrally into two lobes. No. 1 of Plate LVIII is even clumsier. There are the same heads, and there is a simple incised central ornament. No. 2 of that Plate has crescents of flattened shape, due to want of breadth in the space left by the large tablet. They have a decided heart-shaped ornament in the centre, and their whole area is filled with what looks at first like interlacing basket-work. They may be fairly described as ugly, but they have nice rosettes in place of the queer-looking heads at the horns.

The crescents on the Pictish stones have only in one case the lower outline of the crescent broken. In that one case the hinge and the adjoining part of the leg of the pin form parts of the two crescents into which the lower side of the crescent is shaped. In only one case are the horns of the crescent rolled round, and in that case there is nothing like a bird's head; it is a simple roll. This is on the Cadboll Stone, which has indications of comparatively later date. The crescents shewn in our Plates of undressed stones in several cases have incised shapes and patterns which remind us of the legionary tablets.

We must remember that in connection with the two Walls there were a great number of tablets, judging by the number that have been found; and in at least a great majority of cases the frame of the inscription would be ornamented with the crescents. This may well have had something to do with the Pictish conceptions of art, where we find the crescent so very frequent. If that suggestion does not recommend itself as reasonable, we are moved on to a deeper question, how did the crescent come to be so largely used in Roman art? The magnificent example found in Leadenhall Street in 1803, where the crescents have their horns rolled and are filled with reticulated work, and the beautiful crescents, similarly occupied, in the pavement found at Wellow in 1737, are

sufficient evidence of the artistic value attaching to this graceful form in the mind of the masters of Roman mosaic work<sup>1</sup>.

It may well seem a far cry in dates from Agricola and Lollius Urbicus to the Pictish Sculptured Stones. But we have always to bear in mind that that is not the real question. It was but a short cry to Pictish Sculptured Bodies. We have to account for the striking display of "figures" on the bodies of the Picts slain in Stilicho's campaign A.D. 399. Only thirty years before that date the Picts had occupied the district "between the walls" and been driven out by the elder Theodosius. It is true that we do not know what was the nature of the "figures" outlined upon the bodies of the Picts. But when we find that the three symbols are in overwhelming majority among the early Pictish carvings on rude stones, and are practically universal on the Pictish stones early or late, we cannot escape from the argument that they were primal figures. With no other known source of possible origin, we may fairly maintain, as high among possibilities, the Roman origin of two of the symbols as here suggested. That view leaves abundant room for sun—and moon—thoughts in the mind of the early Pict, as well as thoughts and terrors of enormous monstrosities of nature. The mirror and comb, which come next in frequency have no doubt a classical origin. The mirror was frequent in Roman art of the date of which we speak. The Roman officers and ladies no doubt had examples on their ornamental treasures. The comb appears to have been infrequent in art.

The borders of Roman mosaic pavements were frequently occupied by interlacing bands, forming graceful and interesting patterns. These may well have been the examples from which the curious skill of the Pictish carvers developed the intricate patterns we find on their later stones. But the Picts had no monopoly in that development, of which we have already remarked that it is a subject far too extensive to be entered upon in this book.

There remains the third of the Pictish symbols, the "spectacles." This is an exact representation of the great ornamental button-discs on a chieftain's robe of state, each with its loop that passed over the other, with a double-jointed pin going in and out among the strings—or more probably wires—of the loops, to keep them firm in place, the pin being then bent at the joints into horizontal positions, with heads screwed on to make all safe, thus producing a highly decorative effect. On several of the Pictish Stones we have human figures with a clearly drawn circular disc at the front of the robe on each shoulder, as on Plate LIX. These are evidently the means by which the robe is kept from falling off. Some seventy and eighty years ago, the great cloth capes with curly collars which men wore had brass discs of this kind on each side of the neck, with a little brass chain with a hook at the end passing across from one clasp to a firm eye on the other clasp. These discs were embossed with various

<sup>1</sup> *Romano-British Mosaic Pavements*, by Thomas Morgan, F.S.A., Whiting & Co., 1886.

patterns. The cloth capes of that period were put on over various other pieces of dress, and fastened for warmth; the early chieftain Pict had little more than his robe, and every precaution must be taken to prevent its falling off.

The Highlander of to-day keeps up and bears witness to the practice of his Pictish ancestors; but in order that his arm may be free to strike, he has his brooch on the top of one shoulder. He is artistic in personal decoration, as his Pict ancestor was, and his brooch is often a beautiful work of art. But, however beautiful it may be, it cannot rival in beauty the brooches of the early time of which we are writing, witness the Tara Brooch and the Hunterston Brooch from Largo. The pattern on the buttons in Plate LIV, and their general effect, are so curiously like the gold buttons found by Schliemann at Mycenæ, that it is difficult to regard the resemblance as merely accidental<sup>1</sup>. Those who read the pin with the crescent as a capital L for *Luna*, the Moon, read this Z-shaped pin as a capital S, for *Sol*, the Sun. To my mind it calls up the idea of a dazzling zigzag flash of lightning, combined with the idea of thunderbolts in the hand of Jove. Its origin has yet to be found.

It may be well to mention in passing that the discs with the crescents on the legionary tablet no. 1 on Plate LVIII are curiously like the earliest forms of the spectacles as shewn on Plate XLV 1 a, Plate XLVII 1, and Plate XLIX 2, the chief difference in appearance being that the spectacles are incised while the tablet discs are in relief.

Lord Southesk says this is the Sun and Moon, "the Sun-passive and the passive Moon conjoined," a symbol belonging to Frey and Freya. Frey was a member of the divine Triad with Thor and Odin, "god of the sun in its passive aspect; god of the earth; god of fertility, good harvests, property and wealth; patron of mariners; god of peace, and yet sometimes warlike."

There we have the prosaic and the heliac views of the three Pictish Symbols.

My own opinion is that whatever their origin they became totem marks, and then were used to indicate some special rank in the person commemorated. There is one remarkable case of an exceedingly handsome dressed stone which has all three of the symbols, each in a little panel. It was found buried in the earth when the park of Pitfour Castle in the Carse of Gowrie was being enlarged, and it is now set up in the churchyard of the parish of St Madoes. It is a grave offence, in the eyes of some archæologists, to suggest connection between some relic of antiquity and some known person or event. This stone was found near the Falcon-Stone where King Kenneth

<sup>1</sup> See Schliemann's *Mycenæ*, figures 487 to 491. The tombstones shewn in figures 140, 141, 142, 144, might have been dug up in Pictish Caledonia, except for the fact that the chase of the stag is conducted in a chariot, not on horseback, the Greeks not being horsemen. There is, however, nothing like the Pictish symbols at Mycenæ, nor anything of that character of art.

tossed up the falcon that sailed round a great area of the Carse and returned and lit on the Falcon-Stone, the *Saxum Falconis* of the early Hay charters. The King had brought with him the ploughman and his two sons who slaughtered the Danes as they pushed up the bank of the Tay at Luncarty, and saved Scotland. He gave them the lands the falcon had flown round, and made them noble. The great dressed slab has the three men in state robes, one below the other, each on a caparisoned horse. Facing the wrath of the archaeologists, I have suggested that the men on the slab are the three Hays, and the three symbols are significant of the rank or office conferred on the father, the older son, and the younger son, respectively. The position of the panels of the stone clearly suggests that the crescent marks the highest rank, the spectacles the next, and the elephant the third; representing the royal arch, the chieftain's morse, and the heroic deed. The date, 985, is late; but the three elongated horses are very far from the sprightly horses at Meigle and elsewhere.

The centaur on the sculptured stones has remarkable characteristics. It is not of frequent occurrence. One will be found at the foot of the Meigle Stone, Plate LV, and another, in a separate panel, a very unusual arrangement, at the foot of the Aberlemno Stone. There is also a centaur on the great slab in the manse garden at Glamis. In all of these cases the centaur carries a woodman's axe; in two cases an axe in each hand. On the Aberlemno Stone the centaur has tucked under its arm a large conventional bough of a tree. On the Meigle Stone the great bough is far from conventional, it is very life-like. It is hard to resist the conclusion, and I do not attempt to resist it, that here we have representations of a successful attempt to secure a bough of a sacred tree, whether designed for the occasion in Caledonia, or used from an earlier pattern developed in some far distant land at some far distant time. Imagination would carry us beyond the bounds of sobriety if it suggested that inroads of "Picts and Scots," which reached even as far as the southwest of England, were partly due to the existence at Glastonbury of the Sacred Tree.

In connection with the idea of a centaur carrying off a bough of a tree, it may be well to mention a centaur found on an early Greek vase. It is so early that the admirably drawn body and hind quarters of the horse proceed from the middle part of the back of a very finely drawn man. The theory of the origin of centaurs in art is, that the Greeks, who were not horsemen, meeting tribes mounted on horseback, drew them as the centaur referred to is drawn, strictly front-half man and hind-half horse. The man in this case is holding out his right hand to a man on the other side of a tree with fruit. With his left hand he holds a stiff branch lying on his shoulder, slanting upwards, with stiff curved twigs, on some of which appear to be hung the spoils of his chase; an early form of a game bag. It is clear that in this case, though the bough is

there, it is merely a convenience, not an object of acquisition. As in the Pictish cases so here, we may imagine a raid from a distant place upon a sacred tree.

We must not pass without special remark the not infrequent presence of serpents on the Pictish Stones; there is a fine example on the Meigle Stone on Plate LV. We cannot regard the serpent symbol as indigenous in Caledonia. Endless volumes have been written on serpent-cult, human sacrifice to serpents, and so on. The serpent plays a very large part in the mysteries of savage races in serpent-bearing lands. To what early connection of the Pictish people with such lands we are to attribute the appearance of scaly pythons on their stones we cannot even guess. The serpent on the Newton non-inscribed stone is specially rich in scaling, see Plate XL. But here again, so far as the presence of serpents is concerned, it is possible to bring in the idea of Roman art. The first Plate in the important volume of *Art Treasures of the United Kingdom*, 1858, shews an ivory of the second or third century in the Mayer Collection at Liverpool, representing Hygieia. A serpent is shewn at her side standing vertically in sinuous folds on curious little lacertine legs at the tail. A vertical crutch or pin gives it support, and the crutch ends at foot in a trefoil or quatrefoil head very like the heads of some of the Pictish pins. At St Vigean<sup>1</sup> there is on a dressed stone a serpent in folds, similarly vertical, supported by a vertical Z-shaped pin with trefoil heads of the same shape as the serpent's head, curiously like the end of the pin on the Roman ivory. In the Pictish art the serpents are impaled on a lethal pin, which does not look like the worship of serpents. It is more like a symbol of the power of the Cross to overcome evil.

There is, so far as I know, a complete absence of these symbols on sculptured stones in Ireland. And the same is true in the case of many of the other figures which abound on the Pictish Stones in Caledonia. I found among the endless treasures of inscribed and patterned stones at Clonmacnois one or two which must be regarded as of the nature of a link between the Irish and the Caledonian designs. A portion of one of these stones is shewn on our Plate XXXV. The detail of the horse's tail is very Irish.

The opinion that the several special Scottish symbols are the distinguishing marks of the deities of pagan faiths, already referred to, is difficult to maintain. It is much easier to maintain that they were not symbols against which the Christian teachers had to wage a stern warfare of destruction. If they had remained, as they do in the Inverurie district, solitary, or grouped, on rude stones, we might no doubt maintain with much probability that they were the symbols of a paganism abandoned and in course of time forgotten. But when we find the Christian Cross incorporated with them, at first tentatively and

<sup>1</sup> Stuart, *Sculptured Stones*, vol. ii. Plate 25, no. 16.

sparsely, and then increasingly prominent, till in the fully developed sculptures the Cross is by far the most important and most beautiful feature of the sculpture, we seem bound to believe that there never had been anything druidical, gentile, diabolic, in their meaning and use. They were personal emblems of rank, class, position, honour. Some one or other of the many and various figures we find on the stones may have indicated a priestly class, but without any necessary connection with a representation of a pagan deity.

In the history of the Picts and of the Scots, and in the story of the union of the two distinct races, we have some clearly recognisable hints about the dates of sculptured stones in Caledonia.

Kenneth mac Alpin succeeded his father Alpin as king of the Scots of Argyll and the Isles in 836, and succeeded to the kingdom of the Picts of Caledonia in right of his mother, a Pictish princess, sister of Hungus King of the Picts. Kenneth and Alpin are Pictish names, though he was a Scot. The claim to the kingdom among the Picts was by mother-right, not by male descent. As we have seen, the Venerable Bede gives us the legend that the people who took possession of the west coast of Caledonia, having come without wives, had wives given them by the inhabitants of Hibernia, on condition that in recognition of that fact the descent of the chieftainship should always be by mother-right, not as usual by father-right. Thus no Pictish king succeeded his father. A familiar example, already quoted, is that of Talorc or Talorgan king of the Picts. His father was Eanfrith, a brother of our Northumbrian saint king Oswald, who married a Pictish princess. Her son by him succeeded the Pictish king, and is known in the genealogies as Talorc mac Ainfrit.

Kenneth mac Alpin determined to have a central ecclesiastical establishment in his combined kingdom, the ecclesiastical centre of the kingdom of the Scots being at Iona. He selected the site which we call Dunkeld. Here he seated a monastery, dedicated to the Scots Saint, Columba, and to it he transferred a portion of the relics of the saint from Hy, which we call by a mistaken reading Iona<sup>1</sup>.

At Dunkeld, then, we might expect to find, in the course of excavations, stones sculptured after the best fashion then in vogue. But very little has been found there, and nothing that has any connection with what we know as the Pictish symbols. And yet this was the chief seat of religion. A note in the Annals of Ulster tells us that Tuathal, chief bishop of Pictland and abbot of Duncaillenn, fell asleep in 864.

Danish invasions ruined many of the Scottish monasteries. The ecclesiastical centre passed away to St Andrews. Here there are many stones with fine

<sup>1</sup> The Latin name of the island Hy was Ioua insula, the Ioan island. The *u* in *Ioua* was read as an *n*, hence "Iona."

sculptures, but not one that has anything approaching to resemblance to any one of the Pictish symbols.

Another hint is conveyed in the fact that at Meigle, the ancient Migdele, an old capital of a Pictish kingdom, we have the largest collection of Sculptured Stones, and the principal Pictish symbols abound there, as also in the neighbouring parts of Forfarshire. These are in the ancient Pictish province of the Mearns, *Maghcircin*. We may fairly suppose that the art of Pictish sculpture reached its highest and also its latest development in these regions, though there are sporadic examples which discount that opinion. The facts on the whole suggest that some great political and ecclesiastical convulsion brought the beautiful Pictish sculpturing to an untimely end. The absorption of the whole of the Pictish territories in the kingdom of the Scots of Argyll and the Isles evidently provides an adequate conjuncture. In the course of some two or three generations after that great political change, the race of Pictish artists would naturally tend towards dying out. But we cannot doubt that so beautiful an art would linger long, and might even continue to flourish and to develop in a few special places. On Plate XXXV we shew from Meigle the most decadent example of the art with which we are acquainted. Curiously enough, it retains the three symbols.

On a considerable number of supposed connections of Pictish symbols and figures with Norse mythology, of which examples have been given above, Lord Southesk based his conclusions as to the origin and introduction of the so-called Pictish symbolism of which we have so large and unique a collection of examples. He held<sup>1</sup> that the figure symbolism was brought into Pictavia during or shortly before the reign of King Nechtan, A.D. 458–482, by a wandering band of Norsemen or perhaps Goths, who through superior culture and knowledge of secret mythologies gained an influential position, perhaps as Magi. It originated, he believed, in North Pictavia, probably on the banks of the Aberdeenshire Don, which is exactly the view maintained in this present book. Thence, he held, it spread to a small extent into Angus, and to a larger extent near the seaboard of the north-eastern country.

Almost from its institution, he suggested, the symbolism, besides its primary religious meaning, was used as a means of designating rank or office by the main symbols, or family or clan by the minor symbols and the animal devices. After the general adoption of Christianity, which Lord Southesk put as early as "towards the end of the sixth century," the symbols were continued in their secular uses, but deprived of all religious significance; when placed on monuments, they were neutralised by the juxtaposition of the Christian Cross. Further, when an architectural transition from rude stones to dressed stones

<sup>1</sup> *Origins of Pictish Symbolism*, by the Earl of Southesk. Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1893, page 82.



began, the symbols were engraved on cross-slabs of freestone, and were continued with debasements of style till about A.D. 842, when "the establishment of the Scots as the dominant power in Pictavia" occasioned an entire change in the style of monuments and the absolute disuse of the symbols. The symbols, as then understood, related only to the Pictish official system, and had no significance in the system which took its place.

Those are the conclusions to which Lord Southesk's long and close researches led him. They appear to overlook the solid fact of Claudian's statement regarding Stilicho's invasion of Caledonia, in which the poet Claudian himself took part, that in or about the year 399 A.D. when Roman soldiers struck down a Pictish warrior, they stood and examined the figures tattooed on his body. The art of figure-symbolism had been highly developed in Pictland long before its introduction by Norsemen according to Lord Southesk.

For our present purpose, it is of special value that Lord Southesk was led, as we have been led, to regard the district now under discussion as the place of origination of this strange and unique engraving in Caledonia.

While we may be right in founding some argument against any specially pagan religious meaning in the main symbols, on the ground that the Christian Picts freely used them on stones the main feature of which was a nobly wrought Christian cross, we cannot overlook a contrary possibility of origin of the practice of combination, in favour of which we have a highly interesting historical and indeed contemporary evidence. Redwald, king of the East Angles, who succeeded his father in 593, the year in which Columba became Abbot of Iona, reigned during the twenty-five critical years of the first passing from paganism to Christianity of the English and of the far off Caledonian Picts. Redwald had accepted Christianity at Canterbury, but half abandoned it when he returned to his wife and people. To make safe, he combined the appearance of the two faiths. In his temple he had an altar for sacrificing to Christ and a smaller altar to offer victims to devils. It seems far from improbable that the early Caledonian Picts sought to make safe in the same kind of way, placing the Cross, the Symbol of Christ, on one side of a sacred stone, and the symbols of the pagan gods on the other side. However that may be, we may note, in favour of our general argument of pagan altar stones and sacrifices of living things, the fact of Redwald's altar for pagan sacrifices, *arula ad victimas daemoniorum*<sup>1</sup>.

If any such idea was in the minds of the earlier set of carvers of the elaborate dressed stones, there are signs that the later set of carvers had passed away from the idea and used the symbols in direct connection with the Cross of Christ as traditional features of Pictish sculpture of sacred stones.

<sup>1</sup> Bede H. E. ii. 15.

We shall see in the following chapter that in one case, at Rossie in the Carse of Gowrie, Plate LV, a carefully designed crescent and elephant are placed at the side of the great cross which occupies the face of the stone. On the great Priest's Stone at Dunfallandy below Pitlochry two ecclesiastics sit in chairs facing one another on the reverse side of the dressed slab. Between them is a small cross on a stand. Above the cross, under the heads of two snarling dragons whose snake-like bodies edge the stone, there are placed all of the three main symbols, the elephant, the spectacles without pin, and in line below these the crescent with pin.

Any of our readers who wish to carry further the study of the Scottish Symbols would do well to refer to Sir J. Y. Simpson's book *Archaic Sculpturings of Stone Circles &c.*: Edmonston and Douglas, 1867. They will find there a learned account of the sculptures in the Fife Caves, the gaelic name for which we spell phonetically as Wemyss. There are in those caves, in rude but quite unmistakable outline, large numbers of elephants of the characteristic Pictish form, many examples of the spectacles, and one or two incomplete crescents. Probably others have been found since. Some have been found in the Covesea Caves, on the Moray Firth. In the Fife Caves there are animals, swans, fish, serpents, mirrors, combs, and horse-shoes, besides the special symbols. We shall see all of these in our next chapter, on rude stones, between Dee and Don, and enquirers may occupy themselves with the question of the connection between the cave sculptures and sculptors in Fife and the stone sculptures and sculptors in Aberdeen. Sir James Simpson appears inclined to recognise some far-off connection of the cave outlines of elephants with the fossil "British" elephants of whose molar teeth some 2000 were fished up on the Norfolk coast between 1820 and 1833. The site of the present city of London appears to have been one of the haunts of this monster. The question was dealt with in my Cambridge Lectures thirty-two years ago.

Our knowledge of early cave sculptures will be largely increased by a forthcoming book on *Pre-history* by Mr M. C. Burkitt (Cambridge University Press). It is a study of early cultures in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin. Mr Burkitt has studied the prehistoric caves of France and other countries in company with the Abbé Breuil, who contributes a preface to the book. There are a large number of pictures illustrating prehistoric art from France, Spain, Scandinavia, and Russia. The animal figures go back some 10,000 years, and have no resemblance to the Pictish elephants, which are very much later. The suggestions made on page 131 are supported by Mr Burkitt's investigations.

## CHAPTER XII

### *The Pictish Sculptured Stones.*

Topographical distribution of Pictish sculptured stones.—Rude stones and dressed stones.—The number between Dee and Don.—Distribution of the main Pictish symbols on rude and on dressed stones.—Description of several rude stones with sculpture.—Number of objects incised.—Description of six dressed stones with sculptures.—Guinevere's Stone.—The Maiden Stone.—The sculptures remain unique and mysterious.—The Craigmyle Stone.

WE have brought together the principal examples of the Pictish symbols on rude stones in our special part of Aberdeenshire. We owe our illustrations to the skill and the kindness of Mr James Ritchie of Port Elphinstone. A brief description will suffice.

I find that in one of my Disney Lectures at Cambridge in the Lent Term, 1890, on the "Three Symbols," I gave an analysis of the then known examples of Pictish sculptures on rude stones and dressed stones as follows :—

"Of 67 sculptures on rude stones shewn in Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, 3 are between Forth and Tay, 6 between Tay and Dee, 36 between Dee and Spey, 21 north of Spey. That is to say, 57 of the 67 are north of Dee, and 66 of the 67 are north of Forth<sup>1</sup>. In other words, the vast majority are in the regions of the Northern Picts, a small minority in a region of the Southern Picts.

"Of the shaped and prepared sculptured stones, Stuart brought into his tables 43 which have one or more of the three main symbols upon them. Of these 43, none are south of Forth, 27 are between Forth and Dee, 6 between Dee and Spey, 10 north of Spey.

"Thus 57 of the 67 undressed stones are north of Dee, and only 16 of the 43 dressed stones are north of Dee; 85 per cent. of the undressed, 37 per cent. of the dressed.

"It seems to me that we are bound to find some explanation of this, and that a reasonable explanation is that the undressed stones belong to an earlier period than the dressed stones, and that the northern parts were of greater relative importance in the early times than in the later times. That is, that the centre of gravity, so to speak, of the Pictish Kingdom or Kingdoms was towards the north in the early times, towards the south in the later times. This would give us interesting hints as to the dates of the relative monuments, viewed—as I feel they ought in the main to be viewed—as two separate classes of monument."

<sup>1</sup> The one example that remains was found used as a bridge in one of the walks in Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh. It has the "crescent."

The district between Dee and Spey presents the chief contrasts. Its undressed examples were  $53\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. of the whole, its dressed examples under 14 per cent. For our present purpose, which deals with that part of this district which lies between Dee and Don, the contrasts are greater. A very large majority of the undressed stones are in our special district, and we have not one of the 43 dressed examples, the Maiden Stone, itself unique among the dressed examples, lying to the north of Don. Thus the argument stated above is emphasised for our own particular district.

It can safely be said that the number of known undressed stones with sculpture on them is considerably larger now than it was in 1860, is larger indeed than it was in 1890 when my lecture was delivered. On the other hand I am not aware that since 1890 any addition has been discovered to the list of nobly sculptured dressed stones of the symbol type.

We must now glance at the question of the distribution of the main Pictish symbols on the 110 stones dealt with in the preceding paragraphs, bearing ever in mind the fact that we are not taking into account the additional undressed stones, some of which we show on our Plates.

On the 110 stones there were 53 crescents, 5 of them without pins or, as Stuart called them, sceptres; 42 spectacles, 8 of them without pins; 33 elephants; in all 128. The elephant was the only one of the three main symbols that appeared more frequently on the 43 dressed than on the 67 undressed stones. This was due to its frequent occurrence between Forth and Dee, a district which includes many of the finest of the sculptured dressed stones.

The Pictish mirror, unlike the three main symbols, is not unique in art; indeed it is far from being unique. It occurs 34 times between the Forth and the extreme north, evenly divided among the three districts described respectively as between Forth and Dee, between Dee and Spey, and north of Spey.

We may now proceed to examine the numerous examples of Pictish sculpture on rude stones.

### *Pictish Sculptures on rude stones.*

#### PLATE XL.

The non-inscribed stone in the enclosure at Newton has a fine example of the serpent pierced by a jointed pin with handsome heads, a large head near the serpent's head and a smaller head at its tail. It has also a double disc without the usual ornament and without the usual jointed pin with heads.

## PLATE XLIV.

1. A stone in the fence of a garden at Drimmies Farm, on the right-hand side of the road from Chapel of Garioch to Newton. It is well cared for and is in good order. The mirror with an important looking handle is very clear; the handles of mirrors on these stones vary very much. The comb also is clear, but it is rude as compared with the fine example at Meigle, Plate LV, fig. 2, where a very modern looking handle of a mirror is shewn.

The figure at the top of the stone is not complete. It finished exactly as the end which is shewn finishes. It might be called a double trumpet. It is usually in an arch and is known as the horse-shoe symbol.

2. The stone at Tillytarmont, Rothiemay, is very unusual. At first sight it appears to have the spectacle or double-disc symbol; but the right-hand disc stands on what may be a substantial handle, presumably a mirror-case, and the indistinct disc on the left hand is not attached to it, and is not distinct enough to explain itself. The swan is well designed and boldly executed; it bears comparison with any other example of a water bird sculptured on stone.

## PLATE XLV.

1 a. One of two stones in the gable of the old church at Dyce. The elephant here has the usual characteristics, the trunk growing out of the forehead and thrown back; the tusks in profile evidently supposed to be a long jaw; the feet represented with the usual roll; the tail small and curled at end.

The spectacle is very clear so far as the discs are concerned, and they are archaically free from attempt at the ornament which in the fully developed Pictish sculpture is so successfully executed. But the stone-cutter has quite misunderstood the meaning of the pin. The horizontal part of the upper pin looks ornamental but does not bear examination. It has the necessary joint at the left-hand end, but it finishes off in a curve like a whip-lash, instead of passing down to meet the horizontal pin below. The lower pin is treated in the same way, and some attempt appears to have been made to rectify the error of not connecting the upper and lower pins.

1 b. The companion stone in the gable of the old church at Dyce. This most unusual feature of a Christian Cross on a rude stone accompanied by Pictish Symbols is well worth examination. Only a personal interview could make it certain that the stone was a rude stone when the cross was carved upon it.

The arms and stem of the cross are occupied by very ordinary interlacements of endless bands, not skilfully designed or executed; in the north of England, where interlacements abound, these would be regarded as late and

decadent. The central boss is occupied by a typically Irish pattern. The circular figure on the right side of the stem shews the points of the drill well. It is an enriched example of the mirror-case. The figure at the foot which no doubt is meant to look like the double disc is very artistically designed, and the heads of the jointed pin above and below are very rich. The figure to the left of that has a handle at top and bottom and may be a mirror-shaped object formed of concentric circles. On the other hand these objects, which are not infrequent, may represent brooches. Above that is the crescent symbol, occupied by interlacements, the ornamental heads of the pin being carried unusually high up, to occupy the space which on this side of the stem is not occupied.

2. The Crow Stone at Rhynie has a well-designed salmon at top, the tail in particular being careful. Though the tail does not finish off quite in a straight line at the end, it is scarcely curved enough to be meant for a grilse, but that is a matter of opinion ; it is disproportionately small.

The elephant resembles the one on the previous plate in the jaw, but the connection of the trunk with the forehead is sketchy, and the legs are not treated quite in the same way.

#### PLATE XLVI.

1. This stone in the churchyard at Kintore is a rare example of Pictish figures incised on both sides of a rude stone.

The salmon at the top of the face of the stone is of very sturdy character, with a remarkably powerful tail. It is the tail of a salmon not a grilse, notwithstanding its curve, as unlike the poor tail on the Crow Stone as a clever designer could make it. The treatment of the belly fins also is different.

The large circular disc with the cross-bar is a skilfully devised pattern. The original photograph shews clearly how the grooves were made, and when the precise place is pointed out the indications can be seen in the engraving. On the circumference immediately below the cross-bar at the left side, three or four dark spots can be seen. They tell us that the figure of the circle was drawn on the stone, and then holes were drilled close to each other along the whole of the circumference, leaving a succession of pits with little walls between them. These little walls were knocked away, and thus a continuous groove was left. In the course of ages the surface of the stone has gradually worn away and thus the bottom of the groove is open to view, and the little marks are the points of the drill-holes.

When the photograph is closely examined, it appears to shew that the small circles are not isolated. The circumference of the large circle passes off to form one of them and then returns to complete a large semi-circle and form the other small circle. The horizontal lines also are not isolated ; they are a

connected part of the whole system of outline, with its law of alternate under and over. The figure may be meant for a brooch.

2. On the back of this Kintore stone we have the elephant symbol and the crescent symbol. Probably when the stone was originally sculptured this was the more prominent side. The elephant here as in other of the cases in this district shews that the tusks were treated as the jaw. The trunk comes very clearly out of the forehead.

The crescent is boldly and well drawn, and the jointed pin and its decorated heads are effective. As in other cases here, the carver has not understood the drawing of the heads, and has not produced the graceful outline finish of decorative curves.

The area of the crescent is inartistically divided into ungraceful portions by grooved lines. The small holes drilled at the centres of the portions of area are poor art.

PLATE XLVII.

1. The simple double disc without a pin but with five connecting lines, and the crescent with pin and incised lines forming with the angle of the pin a shapely pattern, are worthy of remark.

2. This is the famous stone at Logie Elphinstone with circular stem-line of an ogam script of which various readings are given. We do not venture to add to their number, no satisfactory clue to the principle having been discovered. The stone has had a double disc set on the slant. On that a later engraver has incised a bold crescent with jointed pin, and below it a double disc with Z-shaped pin, the down-stroke very faint, if existent, and the right-hand circle not completed at the junction with the connecting lines. The ornamentation of the crescent is unusual and graceful.

PLATE XLVIII.

1. A rough elephant of ordinary type, and a plain crescent and jointed pin with a little ornamental outline in the crescent, at Logie Elphinstone. This elephant is a subject of remark on page 130.

2. The horse shewn on this stone in the churchyard of Inverurie is unique. On the beautiful dressed stones of the highest period of Pictish art, the horses are all alike, and practically all in the same attitude. This horse is different in all respects. The attitude is powerful and the drawing good except for the muzzle. In the remarkable arrangement of the mane there is certainly some mysterious meaning. Probably we have here a representation of the sacred horse.

## PLATE XLIX.

1. On this stone in the churchyard of Inverurie we have the serpent, with the nearly horizontal pin faintly shewn; the figure which is called the mirror case; and the crescent with jointed pin and a curious and unusual pattern within the angle of the pin.

2. Yet another stone in Inverurie churchyard. The double disc here has three concentric rings instead of two as hitherto. The jointed pin is very clearly seen, and the ornament of the upper head is unusually graceful. There is seen above it a clearly cut line like an inverted crescent.

## PLATE L.

1. The stone at the gate of Rhynie churchyard has marked and unusual characteristics.

The mirror, with double circular handle, and the comb of curious upper outline, do not need remark. The nondescript head and half body is difficult of interpretation, but the animal's head is carefully drawn. The vertical placing of the spectacles or double disc, instead of horizontal placing, is due no doubt to the fact that the nondescript figure did not leave room for the usual position. The jointed pin in the shape of a capital Z is well done, the upper end being lost in the fracture or wearing of the stone.

2. The stone at Mounie, Daviot, has the mirror and the comb as at Rhynie; a plain crescent; and a crescent with jointed pin of unusual solidity and leaf-shaped incisions.

## PLATE LI.

1. From the Broomend of Crichtie, in the parish of Kintore, in a field on the right of the road towards Inverurie, at the village of Port Elphinstone. This stone has the elephant, and below it the crescent with the incised lines usual in the district. It stands with two other great stones on a circular area surrounded by a broad and deep trench, with two level crossings on a diameter line south and north. This is not its original position; it was brought here in modern times from its site some fifty yards off. The other two stones are the remains of a circle probably of six stones; four of them were standing in 1780. In line with the east edge of the southern crossing of entry a great stone stands some fifty or sixty yards away in the direction of the Paper Mills. No doubt another great stone stood opposite to it, in line with the west edge of the crossing, and the two were members of an avenue of great stones leading to the entrenched circle. Mr Ritchie has found remains of one of the stones of the avenue nearer the Paper Mills. His paper on this remarkable circle is well worth careful study. It forms part of volume liv. of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. vi. Fifth Series, Session 1919-20.



2. This stone in the wall at the churchyard of Clatt has an elephant with the tusks represented as the closed jaw, and the horse-shoe ornament whose meaning we do not know. Immediately below it in the figure, on another stone, a disc is seen, possibly with the handle which makes it mean a mirror case, but more probably, it is a plain double disc built in upright, with the down-stroke of the Z-shaped pin shewing.

It is a misfortune that the minister of Clatt who wrote the New Statistical Account of the parish in 1840 does not make mention of the elephant stone here described. He was evidently interested in archæology, and it might have been of real value to have his opinion of the elephant. He tells us of another stone lately dug up at a depth of 6 feet, a smooth stone 4 feet long by 2 broad, on which is represented a salmon above a distinctly described arch. This is evidently not the Kintore salmon nor the Rhynie salmon; and as the water of Bogie separates Rhynie from Clatt the juxtaposition of the two salmon stones is locally instructive. "As the salmon was held sacred by the Druids," the minister remarks, "it is highly probable that this emblematical representation was connected with the ceremonies of their worship." A broad smooth stone, he tells, formed part of the old wall of the burying ground at Clatt, on which were engraven several single and concentric circles and other figures representing barbed arrows. This no doubt is the stone of which the small fragment shewn on Plate LI formed part. The "barbed arrows" are presumably a quaint description of the horizontal joints of the Z-shaped ornamental pin.

The minister further describes a stone circle in the north part of the parish in terms which we cannot quite follow. We quote his words. There is a supposed altar stone and a few of the uprights. The stone supposed to have formed the sacrificial altar in the centre was of large dimensions, 10 feet in length, 9 feet in breadth, 4 feet in thickness. At each extremity longitudinally there stood a perpendicular stone of about 6 feet in height, vulgarly known as the "Horns of the Altar." It was placed at an angle of about 45° with the dip in the direction of the meridian. In the line of the circle of about 25 yards diameter were placed at equal distances 7 upright stones 5 to 6 feet in height. The whole space within the circumference was paved with stones to the depth of about 3 feet.

Clatt or Clet, he adds, is the gaelic *cleit*, concealed. "It is concealed from the view on every side." "It appears to have been one of the favourite seats of the Druids."

The stone which the minister described with the salmon above an arch was evidently the stone which in 1884 was described as having stood beside the Salmon Well at Clatt. It was removed thence to Percylieu and was taken to the farm of Mytice, three miles west of Gartly Station. It is now safe at Leith Hall near Kennethmont, but unnecessarily exposed to the weather. The Salmon Well presumably took its name from the salmon on the stone and

cannot now be traced. Most of the salmon has been broken, the outline of the belly and its two fins alone remain. The horse-shoe arch is still very clear<sup>1</sup>. It is the best of all the arches, and the most suggestive.

PLATE LII.

1. This is the stone just outside the churchyard wall of Logie Coldstone, and is known in the neighbourhood as St Wolock's Stone, variously spelled. The details of the life and journeyings of this early Saint will be found in the account of the Newton Stone, Chapter X.

2. This stone, now placed in safety at Tillypronie, used to stand on a hillock at Logie Coldstone. "Coldstone" meaning the Assembly Stone, it is thought that this may be the actual Assembly Stone which marked the place of public assembly for the business of the neighbourhood. The hillock on which it originally stood was known as Tomachar, the knoll of the fen, rising out of a marsh on the farm of Newton. The stone is thence known as the Tomachar Stone; sometimes as the Newton Stone, with some risk of confusion with the more famous inscribed stone now called the Newton Stone.

It has an ordinary crescent with the L-shaped pin, and the curious and infrequent symbol sometimes called the House of Life, with the Z-shaped pin.

We have now examined 19 rude stones in our immediate district. Seventeen different objects are incised on these 19 stones. In 16 cases there are ornamental jointed pins or sceptres, always in combination. The other objects, and the number of times of their occurrence, can be stated as follows:—

Crescent, 10, 9 with pin	
Double discs, 7, 5 with pin	Brooch, 1
Elephant, 6	Head and neck, 1
Mirror or case, 6	Horse, 1
Comb, 2	House of life, with pin, 1
Single disc, 2	Serpent, with pin, 1
Fish, 2	Swan, 1
Double trumpet (?), horse shoe, 1	
"      "      wavy, 1	

Thus the ornamental Pin or Sceptre, the Crescent, the Double Disc, the Elephant, the Mirror, stand clear at the head of the seventeen objects, and the order of merit of the Three Main Symbols is Crescent, Spectacles, Elephant.

We may add two interesting stones in the neighbourhood whose figures we do not describe as Pictish.

<sup>1</sup> The stone is figured and described by Mr Ritchie in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vols. xlv. and xlix.

PLATE LIII.

1. This is the upper surface of a cup-marked stone built into the garden dyke close to the farm-steading of Tofthills. It has on it a cross in a circle. On another part of the stone there are a number of unusually large cup marks, some of them four inches in diameter. It was discovered in the foundations of an old barn, and may have been one of the stones of a circle which is said to have stood near the farm buildings. The site of the circle is still known by the interesting name of The Sunken Kirk. There is a very perfect cross of this character in a circle with a cup in each quadrant at Mill of Crathes.

2. Mr Ritchie informs us that this stone was found on the slope of the Barmekyn when some trenching was being done eighty years ago. It was afterwards built into a dyke on the farm of Upper Mains of Echt. There it remained for about a quarter of a century, when it was taken out of the dyke and removed to Dunecht House by the Earl of Crawford. It was figured in Stuart's *Sculptured Stones*<sup>1</sup>, and then for some time it was lost sight of. It was dug out of the lawn a year or two ago, and set upright once more. Near the place where it was found on the Barmekyn is the land of Mainecht, Meanecht, or Monecht<sup>2</sup>, Upper and Lower, formerly, we are told, on what authority is not clear, called Monks' Echt, which in the early half of the thirteenth century came into the possession of the Abbey of Scone. The stone has probably something to do with that early foundation. The sale map of 1844 gives East Meanecht, North Meanecht, South Meanecht, all south of Dunecht House.

The brethren of Scone were not monks. They were Austin Canons. The Register of the Abbey was printed in 1843 as no. 78 of the publications of the Bannatyne Club. The volume is also no. 62 of the publications of the Maitland Club. The gift of the church of Echt to the Abbey is found at page 58, in the early days of the son of William the Lyon, Alexander II, who reigned A.D. 1214–1249. Thomas son of Malcolm of Lunden, for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his predecessors, gives the church Hachtis in Mar with all that justly pertains to it, to God, St Mary, St Michael, and all Saints, and to the abbot and convent of Scona. Most unfortunately the list of witnesses is not in this particular case printed, no doubt because it was never entered in the Register, the names being names of a far-off region. To us they might have been of great value.

At pages 66–69 we have the confirmation of Pope Honorius III, A.D. 1216–1227, of many gifts to Scone, including the church of Heyth.

A Robert de Lunden had a house in Aberdeen at this period (Register, page 59) which looks like a local connection in the neighbourhood.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. Plate 124, page 69.

<sup>2</sup> The Ordnance map calls them all Monecht. The Charters call them Manecht.

We have seen in connection with Rayne the gifts of "church and vill," church and church lands. We know the value of the kirk lands of Echt to the Abbey of Scone. The rental from which we take it is for the year 1561, which is very late. But the rental from the kirks in the possession of the Abbey is prefaced by the statement that "The kirk is set for sylver conforme to the auld rentall," "sylver" being the rental in money, exclusive of payments in kind. The kirk of Blair was £82, the kirk of Echt £26. 13s. 4d. Echt does not appear in the details of Teind Victualis in wheat barley and meal in the Scone Register.

### *Pictish Sculptures on dressed stones.*

Having now examined a large number of examples of Pictish figures incised on rude stones in our district, we must pass out of our district into the parts of Pictish Caledonia which lie to the south, chiefly in Forfarshire, and glance at the marvellous examples of the finished work of the hereditary carvers, not incised but in relief.

On Plates LIV and LV we give three examples of the cross fronts of stones and three examples of the reverse sides of stones. Three of the figures are photographed down from the outlined rubbings to one-twelfth of the original size, and three to one-eighteenth. This method has the advantage of giving correct proportions, however apologetic we may have to be for faulty drawing on our part.

We must not dwell on the intricacies of the interlacing patterns. No description could enable the reader to understand how laborious the work of outlining the decaying patterns has in many cases been, or how fascinating the process of disentanglement is, when the endless skill of the designers faces us with ever fresh and ever subtle complications to analyse. The interlacing bands, ever returning upon themselves, with no beginning and no end, are a symbol of eternity common to the Celtic races as to the near eastern, and eagerly seized upon and developed by the artistic Angles as contrasted with the inartistic Saxons.

Plate LIV, fig. 1, shews the face of a great stone at Glamis. The figures on the left side of the stem of the cross are supposed to refer to events of local importance. On the right side we must note the centaur, so vigorous in action, carrying in each hand an axe. Another centaur has a panel to itself in fig. 2, carrying a conventional tree and a carpenter's axe; the fore part is much perished. Another in fig. 3 of Plate LV is carrying a natural tree or large branch tucked under the arm, and a carpenter's axe in each hand. It is very difficult to resist the impression that these figures may or must represent raids, whether actual or traditional, upon some sacred tree.

The figure below the arm, the head and neck of a quadruped, is found again at the top of fig. 2 on Plate LV, and we had an example of it on a rude stone at Rhynie churchyard, Plate L. It may be connected with the sacred horse. The figure below that is not infrequent. It may be a mirror with rings, or a brooch. We had it in curious outline on Plate XLVI, at Kintore.

The cross on Plate LIV, fig. 3, has a Chinese fret on the boss, as has also the cross on Plate LV. The figures at top are probably angels. This stone used to be visible from the train near Eassie station, by the side of the burn. It is now safe in the old kirk near by. The hunter and the stag are vividly true in drawing and in action.

The cross on Plate LV, fig. 1, is unlike all other crosses of this character in having the panels of the stem occupied by horsemen in place of interlacing patterns. There is nothing distinctive about the horsemen to explain their unusual position. To some persons this occupation of the stem is a sign of lateness; to others, of earliness. The figure in the top left corner irresistibly reminds us of Wölund's brother catching large birds to use their feathers to make wings for Wölund (Weyland Smith) to escape from his island. That Saga reference does not tend to an early date. The same view may be taken of the presence of the carefully designed crescent and elephant by the side of the stem of the cross, the only example I can remember of main Pictish symbols on the same side of the stone as the cross. The angel at the top of this side of the stone is not an unusual feature; we have it in the same position in Plate LIV, fig. 3.

We can now turn to the reverse of the stones. It is here that the Pictish fancy has full swing. Plate LIV, fig. 2, is an excellent example, with the noble crescent and double disc at top, filled with patterns of which parts only are worked out in our diagram, and fastened by jointed pins with beautiful heads. The horses below are admirably drawn, shewing powerful hocks and the tails set in low, as in Irish horses. One of the noblest trotting horses and the noblest galloping horse are on a dressed stone at Kirriemuir (Stuart, i. xlvi) the capital of the Earldom of Angus. The trumpeters, the deer, the hounds, are creditable. The centaur in the panel has been mentioned already. The little group of three figures suggests the inquisitive appearance of a bear to a man out after a stag. There are two trumpeters at the top right-hand corner of the hunt on the now famous Cadboll stone.

Plate LV, fig. 2, is a curious collection of patterns. The fish at top, evidently a salmon, would weigh about 10 lbs. The triquetra and the elephant tucked in below are curious, a solitary triquetra being very unusual as a Pictish symbol, if not unknown. The fine eel or serpent transfixed by a pin we have seen before, transfixed or not transfixed, as also the horse's head. The nondescript below

is probably out of drawing. The mirror and comb we have had before. The animal below the comb is apparently a camel; this is of course a very Arabian connection. The horsemen on this stone are all going up hill. The four-footed long-bodied creature tied up in itself conveniently fills a gap in the field.

The stone whose reverse is shewn in Plate LV, fig. 3, is one of the very noblest of all. It used to stand on the King's Mound in the churchyard of Meigle, the ancient Migdele, once the residence of the Pictish kings. The place is connected in legend with King Arthur's nephew Mordred, who succeeded to the Pictish throne by mother-right, being the son of a Pictish princess. The legend makes him carry Guinevere off after Arthur's death and confine her in his sea fortress of Dynbaer (Dunbar), and then keep her at Meigle till she died. This stone is by tradition Queen Vannora's Stone, that is, Guinevere's, and the first description of the remarkable group at the centre of the stone is that this was Guinevere "being dune to death for nae gude that she did." It is in fact an admirable representation of a favourite subject in early sculpture, Daniel in the lions' den, the four Byzantine lions being extraordinarily fine. The well-designed centaur has already been mentioned. The strikingly vivid scene at the foot carries us very far back to the time of water monsters and long-horned cattle, a man coming to the rescue of his cow, which has been seized by the long muzzle by a water-monster as it came to drink.

In writing of the Balquhain Circle we made reference to the Maiden Stone in that neighbourhood. As it is the only example in our district of Pictish sculpture on a dressed stone it seems right to include a representation of it in our Plates and a brief description in the text. We owe our illustration, Plate LVI, to the kindness of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. It is taken from their great publication, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, by the late Romilly Allen, long a colleague of mine in the study of Anglian work, fig. 207, page 191.

The plate shews the back of the stone. In the top panel there are creatures much defaced, probably the lowest is a centaur. Below that is a curious figure something resembling that at Tillypronie, possibly a "house of life," with the Z-shaped jointed pin with ornamental head. Below that, the elephant symbol, and at the bottom the mirror and comb.

The front is even more perished than the back. It has at top a human figure with arms stretched out and a fish monster with spiral tail on either side of him. It has been suggested that this is Jonah with two whales. Below that is a great wheel cross, no doubt with hampered animals on each side of the stem, overcome by the power of the Cross of Christ. Below that again some knot-work of various types.

One of the edges has the simplest possible interlacement work of Staffordshire knots, the other edge has a very effective endless band, proceeding in

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*for* figure 1 *read* figure 2  
*for* figure 2 *read* figure 1





acute angles not in rounded curves, so wrought as to produce the effect of a series of stiff lozenges.

We have in this chapter merely touched upon a small fraction of these exquisitely designed Pictish stones. They are unique in the whole field and history of art, except that, as we have seen, a button or two deep down in Mycenae, and a stag hunt there, may claim some distant kinship with them. We have spoken in this volume of many mysteries, and have tried to see through the veil of concealment or to lift a corner of it. The beautiful sculptured stones of Pictish Caledonia continue to defy all such attempts. They remain mysterious. How thankful we ought to be that there does remain for us a mystery unrevealed.

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### *The Craigmyle Stone.*

Since these pages were completed, we have received from Lord Shaw of Dunfermline a photograph of a stone found in 1897 on his estate of Craigmyle, Torphins. The incised lines were chalked in at the time, and figure 1 of Plate LIX is a reproduction of the photograph then taken. The following information is recorded on the back of the photograph :

The lower symbol, a serpent, is usually associated with sun-worship. The mark on the serpent may have been an incised circle, representing the sun's disc. The enclosed part being thus weakened may have peeled off.

The upper symbol may represent what is called a Sun Mansion. This seems to consist of a gateway, over which is an elliptical arch, pierced by a sceptre partly obliterated.

The interpretation of the symbols is by the late Rev. J. G. Michie, Dinnet, and Lord Southesk expressed his concurrence.

Photograph taken in 1897. See *Scottish Notes and Queries* for December 1897.

Lord Shaw had told me of the Craigmyle Stone long before I saw this photograph. I had applied to my unfailing friend Mr James Ritchie, and had received from him the photograph which is reproduced in figure 2 of Plate LIX. It was taken when the stone was first found. In the letter which accompanied it, Mr Ritchie informed me that the stone is of hard granite and that probably the incised lines of the upper part were never very deep ; he thought that the upper part appeared to be the two-legged rectangle, something like that at Tillypronie (see Plate LII) but without the Z-shaped sceptre. The two rectangles at Tillypronie are in fact the front of the Mansion mentioned in the above description of the Craigmyle stone, with the romanesque round-headed

doorway between them. It is unnecessary to point out that the stone has been seriously injured in two places, and that the lower part of the serpent has broken away.

An inspection of Mr Ritchie's photograph soon convinced me that even that trained eye had been led aside by the appearance of the two "rectangles." The recollection of a stone at Invergowrie which I had included in my *Disney Lectures* in 1890 gave me a very different idea of the meaning of the incisions. I give in figure 3 of Plate LIX the photo-lithograph of my outlined rubbing of the Invergowrie stone, reduced to one-twelfth of the actual size. It will be seen that there are three ecclesiastics in vestments, two of them having buttons or discs, marked with crosses, for fastening their robes. They stand upon a panel containing two quadrupeds curiously hampered, representing the powers of evil overcome by the Church of Christ, the horns of the beasts enlaced, each beast biting his own enlaced tail with great teeth. It seems to me clear that the meaning of the Invergowrie stone and the meaning of the Craigmyle stone are one and the same. The Craigmyle stone is much ruder, the power of evil is very much more graphic and direct. The head of the priest is of course quite out of proportion, and is sunk lower in the vestment than the central head at Invergowrie.

There remain the fine lines at the top of all. These I feel sure were never finished. We have the little pick-marks here and there, shewing that the transformation from a scratched straight line to a groove had been begun. Lord Southesk and Mr Michie had evidently missed the downstroke which passes from the left-hand end of the horizontal line down onto the priest's right shoulder and along the side of his right cheek to where his hand would be. This I take to be the staff of the banner of Christ, the banner decreasing in breadth towards the right, its lower edge disappearing behind the priest's head. I sketched out my idea of what the whole figure had been, and my friend Mr Emery Walker, who produced Plate LIX for me, has carefully worked it out, strictly following the lines of the original. That is the history of figure 4 of Plate LIX.

So far as our present knowledge goes, we venture to claim complete uniqueness in Caledonia for this stone of Lord Shaw's. If we are right in our general idea, curious questions of special occasion and of date and of art present themselves.

## CHAPTER XIII

### *Charts of Constellations*

The Druids and the stars.—Charts of stars.—Knowledge of stars by savage races.—The Pleiades.—Nilsson's *Primitive Time-Keeping*.—Modern ignorance of the stars.—Instruction in the stars among savages.—The Picts likely to make charts on stone.—Their circles were astronomical.—The Dunecht Observatory.—The Sin Hinny constellations.—Unmistakable.—Changes in the appearance of constellations.—The Rothiemay Stone.—A chart of bright stars.—The names of some.—The inversion of the area of stars.—Druids' star schools.—Scandinavian cup-markings.—Many constellations recognisable.—The name-animal on stone instead of a group of cups.—Mr Mann's theory of cup-marks as scientific astronomical registrations, apart from possible exceptional cases of star charts—Cup-marks in the Channel Islands.

It is sometimes helpful to compare the amount of our surprise that a thing has happened with the amount of surprise we should have felt if it had not happened.

We have seen on page 6 Julius Cæsar's remarkable statement of the doctrines and the studies of the Druids. That statement points to a high advance in thought, to abstruse studies in spiritual and physical science. Taking the latter point, we learn that the Druids had many discussions touching the stars and their motion. If the Druid priests had the habit of using indelible cup-marks on stones of their edifices as registers of recurring events or for any other purposes, as it would appear they had, they could not fail to see how like the grouping of cups was to the combinations of the heavenly bodies. Those combinations were the most beautiful and mysterious objects in their experience, were their only tellers of time at night, were their best compasses, and were their kalendars of the seasons, their farmers' almanacs. We might, not ineffectively, put it the other way round, and make the star-chart the origin of the cup-marks, which were afterwards used for other purposes as suggested at page 72, or it may have been in some cases used aimlessly.

We have had occasion to remark that when our ancestors, of whatever race, were savages, there is no reason to suppose that they were less savage than the most savage races are now. We may fairly add that there is no reason to suppose that they were more ignorant than the most savage races are now. If that latter statement is accepted, we must credit our ancestors in this island, at the time of their worst savagery, with an intimate study and knowledge of the constellations in the heavens which cannot be affirmed of one in a thousand of our Britons of to-day. Take one single constellation, the Pleiades. The most barbarous and savage peoples in Africa and America and the islands of the east know very much more about the Pleiades than any class of people in

this island of ours does. The Pleiades are their kalendar, their farmers' almanac. Their agriculture, their journeyings, their voyagings, all are dependent upon the Pleiades. The weather in parts in or near the tropics, where the weather is not the shuttlecock it is with us, is indicated by the position of the Pleiades at sunset or sunrise. The indications are so regular that the Pleiades are believed to be the cause of the weather ; they actually bring the seasons, and by one race and another they are in consequence worshipped. There are endless mythological stories about the powerful personages who are the Pleiades. Indeed of the constellations as a whole it may be said that the savage tribes of to-day have stores of mythology exceeding in strangeness of imagination all the mythology of Greece and Rome which we learn with amusement, and forget, while the savages earnestly believe. In Nilsson's *Primitive Time-Keeping*<sup>1</sup>, we have fourteen large and closely printed pages on *Star-lore* among natives in North and South America, Africa, India, Australia, Oceania ; and fourteen similar pages on *Observations of the Stars* by natives in Australia, N. and S. America, the East Indian Archipelago, Torres Straits, Melanesia, Polynesia. There are endless names of constellations among native tribes. One of the names at Torres Straits, the Shark, comes near to us in Aberdeenshire, for it includes the Great Bear, the Northern Crown, and Arcturus.

Writing of the apparently universal determination of the recurrent seasons among native races by observation of constellations, Dr Nilsson says<sup>2</sup>: "Stellar science and mythology are therefore wide-spread among the primitive and extremely primitive peoples, and attain a considerable development among certain barbaric peoples. Although this must be conceded, some people are apt to think that the determination of time from the stars belongs to a much more advanced stage : it is frequently regarded as a learned and very late method of time-reckoning. Modern man is almost entirely without knowledge of the stars ; for him they are the ornaments of the night-sky, which at most call forth a vague emotion, or are the objects of a science which is considered to be very difficult and highly specialised, and is left to the experts. It is true that the accurate determination of the risings and the settings of the stars does demand scientific work, but not so the observation of the visible risings and settings."

Is it really necessary to argue that there must have been charts of constellations among the primitive peoples, so that they might be studied by day as well as by night ? When we read of a native islander of to-day placing in order a number of grains of maize, and when his operations were examined it

<sup>1</sup> By Martin P. Nilsson, Professor of Classical Archæology and Ancient History in the University of Lund : Lund, and Oxford University Press, pp. 369.

<sup>2</sup> Page 128.

was found that he had mapped out constellations, we can scarcely doubt that he was re-producing a chart. And when we find a considerable native dwelling described as a school where the boys are put through a course of instruction in the stars, to fit them for their work in life, we can scarcely suppose that they have no instruction in the forms and indications of the seasonal constellations other than by observation of the sky at night. To suppose that, is to credit the instructors with a stupidity and lack of resource quite out of keeping with the ability which their use of the star-kalendar implies. If any savage race could be credited with indelible charts of stars on stone, we know of no race so instinctively prone to incisions on the surfaces of stones as the Picts. We do not suggest that Pictish sculptured stones go so far back as the astronomical cup-markings. Our suggestion is that the race which in course of time developed the sculptures we have been examining, was specially likely to copy on stone the constellations most important in their daily and yearly life. With such a people, we have reason on our side when we are less inclined than we may be in the case of other savages, to ascribe to chance such resemblances to constellations as we may find in the groups of their cup-marks on some few stones. This point is strengthened when we look through scores of their cup-markings on many other stones without finding any sort of chance likeness to significant constellations.

Further, it appears to us incontestable that at least the great majority of the recumbent stones in our Pictish district were laid on astronomical principles, for astronomical purposes; that they were the scientific result of, and the material aid to, astronomical observation and calculation. The minds and the purposes of the prehistoric magicians of our circles would seem to have been wholly given to astronomical observation and calculation.

On the whole, we may conclude that we should be more surprised not to find than to find some definite indications of star-charts among the very large number of cup-markings in the Pictish parts of Caledonia<sup>1</sup>.

Dunecht House has a special right to have an interest in astronomy. The Earl of Crawford established an Observatory there, with an outlying appurtenance on the highest point of the Barmekyn; all removed before Lady Cowdray's time. It was in this observatory that Dr Copeland and Dr Lohse shewed that iron was present in the body of the Comet of 1882, which thus had brought iron from the depths of space<sup>2</sup>.

Plate VIII is laid in such a position that the reader looks at it as if he were looking at the stone as it lies in Plate VII. As a matter of fact, if

<sup>1</sup> Many years ago we called attention to an *a priori* method of proof of the existence of dragons in the Grisons, which we fear that some of our readers may regard as like in character to the above argument:—*Le Pais des Grisons est si plein de montagnes et Cavernes, qu'il seroit étonnant qu'il ne s'y trouvât pas de dragons. Off the Mill*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. S. Ball's *Starland*, page 269.

the stone were set up as it originally was, with its further edge resting on the ground, and the cup-markings were looked at from outside the circle, whence alone they could be seen, they would be upside down and our Plate should have been laid accordingly. We have laid it as it is in order to give Pictish astronomy its best chance.

The rubbing was taken for us by an inexperienced hand. It was difficult to deal accurately with it, especially in regard to the various sizes of the cups. Our Plate must not be taken as completely representing the degrees of size of the cups, but on the whole it is fairly representative in that respect. From the nature of the case a direct photograph was not obtainable.

Sir James Simpson noticed these cup-marks in 1867 in his *Archaic Sculptures* referred to on page 140. He remarks that they do not seem to be arranged in any special order.

Looking at Plate VIII as it is, the combination which first catches the eye is the saucer-shaped collection of six or seven cups at the top, about the middle of the stone, one cup considerably larger and two smaller than the others. This is curiously like Corona, even to the placing of the large cup.

If we look at the map of the constellations on Plate LXIII, we see to the right of Corona the Great Bear, and to the left of Corona Hercules and then Cygnus. The cups in the top left of Plate VIII are like the handle of a stiletto, resembling Cygnus, and the six cups in the lower left closely resemble Hercules. Thus we have resemblances of three constellations, in the order in which the constellations actually occur.

Next to the right of Corona in the heavens comes the Great Bear. Colonel Tilney, as we have seen<sup>1</sup>, visited our stone with an eye to astronomy, and returned to announce that he found the Great Bear on the stone. The three cups on the extreme right are an evident indication, and the largest cup in Corona and the three cups below it complete the resemblance, the two pointers pointing straight to the single cup to the left of Corona, which might be called the Pole Star.

But that makes the Great Bear face the wrong way, a feature of which we shall see more when we come to the Rothiemay Stone. An eminent astronomer, whom we evidently must not name, writing in a benevolently adverse spirit, points out that if we discard the large cup in Corona we have a curiously perfect square which fits on to the three cups to the right and gives us the Little Bear the right way round. As a fact, the Great Bear should come here if this is a continuous chart of constellations, the Little Bear being some considerable distance away.

We may even go a step further, and find the Great Bear the right way round as well as the Little Bear the right way round. Taking the same

<sup>1</sup> Page 58.

four cups for the Great Bear as for the Little, we find the other three stars in a curve on the left, and thus have the Great Bear the right way round.

The learned and benevolently adverse astronomer who sees these curious resemblances to three or four constellations brought together, prefaces his report by the remark that in any perfectly hap-hazard crowd of dots an astronomer could always find resemblances to groups of stars. However true that may be, if any one will compare our Plate VIII with the cover of one edition of Sir Robert Ball's "*Starland*," he will see at the foot of the cover a startling likeness to our six stars of Hercules. It would be difficult now to make on stone a better copy of Ball's Hercules, or indeed of Corona as it now is.

With reference to the natural remark that astronomers could find resemblances to groups of stars in any fortuitous collection of dots, we may say that we have tried the experiment of making dots blindfold and freehand and have not produced anything like the Great Bear. Further, we may add that we have studied the large number of cup-markings in Caledonia which my old colleague Romilly Allen published, without being able to find anything that looks like the Great Bear or others of the most conspicuous constellations of the northern hemisphere. But an astronomer's eye might well find examples.

We are very ready to allow that if the six cup-marks we have called Hercules were found in a large collection of marks, it would be reasonable to urge that it was a chance resemblance. It would be less reasonable to urge this in the case of the cups we have called Corona, where the details are so striking. But when there are added on the same stone the Great Bear and the Little Bear, each of them the right way round, we seem to have some ground for claiming that at Sin Hinny we have an instructional chart on which the magician could teach his apprentice, instead of teaching him by pointing with his finger to the stars in the sky, with no assurance that the apprentice was looking at the right star. We use the same method now. We can almost imagine the magician shewing the difference between the two Bears by means of his cup-marks.

The learned and kindly astronomer adds that if we are really dealing with cups made as charts of constellations more than 2000 years ago, it is hardly likely that they should have the declination or meridian altitude we should deduce from Plate VIII.

It would not appear that the grouping of the seven main stars of the Great Bear has undergone considerable change in the course of 2000 or 3000 years, although it may well be that the considerable change of position of the actual pole has set the constellation at a different angle on the meridian. We have now a normal view of the square of the Bear, while the early Pict may have had a corner view, which gave him the effect of a rectangular lozenge; or if he saw it normally as a square, we should see it as a lozenge.

Thus the constellations as a mass might have a very different appearance then, and yet, when any one of them came to be planned on deer-skin or on stone, and set out in the most convenient position, which in the case of Corona or the Bear on the Sin Hinny Stone is certainly the horizontal position, each constellation would look very much as it now does when we turn our map round and set the constellation horizontally.

We turn now to Plates LX and LXI, the Rothiemay Stone and the Rothiemay Stars. The description of this stone will be found at pages 83 and 84, with an account of the extreme pains which Mr Ritchie took to secure a photograph which should shew all of the 107 cups. Sir James Simpson gives a sketch of these cup-markings "accurately copied from a photograph." The sketch only shews between fifty and sixty cups, and does not include the Great Bear.

With expectations based on the Sin Hinny Stone, we failed to discover astronomy on the Rothiemay photograph, till it occurred to us to place the photograph on a sheet of cardboard, and drive a pointer through each of the 107 cups. The first glance at the pricks on the cardboard shewed the present Great Bear, with accompanying stars.

To bring this curious collection of cup-marks into as close relation as may be with the map of the stars of the northern hemisphere, we have pricked through all the cups on the enlarged photograph, filled in the dots on Plate LXI of various sizes, turned the sheet upside down, and photographed it in a mirror.

We must make a clear distinction between the aim of a Pict in shewing the shape of a constellation, and his aim in shewing the position of the principal bright stars, or their direction from the star which he took to be his pole star. This later and more scientific aim had nothing to do with shape, or with convenience of placing. The Pict had a marked centre, and all he had to do was to dot the bright stars here and there, as near as he could in their observed directions from his centre. That he should dot in other stars was very natural. Further, if he had a large circular area for his markings, he would place his bright stars as nearly as he could at their relative distances from his centre. If he had a square area, the same could be done. But with a rectangular area, long and comparatively narrow, he would have to bring some of the bright stars nearer to his centre, the one point needing care being to place them in the right direction.

The shape of the Great Bear is well known. The seven cups (4) which we have connected by lines we may call by the name of the Great Bear. Certain stars are in relation with the constellation, as for instance the Pole Star to which the "pointers" direct. There is a large cup (5) to which two of the seven point, just about where the Pole Star might be, and the cup has a ring round it.



This cup we may call by the name Polaris. There is a cup between it and the Great Bear cups ; this we may call by the name of one of the stars of Draco. There is a cup (3) under the Bear's tail, just where in the sky there is a star called the Hunting Dog ; we may give that name to this cup. In the same sort of make-believe way we may call various cups (1) Arcturus, (2) Bootes, (8) Aldebaran, Capella (between 5 and 8), (6) Vega, (7) Altair, (9) and (10) perhaps Castor and Pollux brought nearer. Having done that we may survey our work and take measurements to determine which is the central cup in all the area of the cups. We find it is exactly the cup which we have named Polaris after the Pole Star. We may remember that a Pole Star is the central star of the northern hemisphere.

These coincidences are numerous ; they are certainly curious ; they may fairly be described as remarkable. We could have carried them further. We make bold to say that they give to the Rothiemay Stone, as revealed to us by Mr Ritchie's infinite pains and skill, a position of unique interest in this island, so far as we are up to this time informed.

It is evident that Vega and Altair are much too near the Pole Star, as contrasted with Aldebaran. On the other hand, Arcturus and Aldebaran are correctly shewn as practically equidistant from the Pole Star. We have forecast a reasonable justification for suggesting Vega and Altair, so much too near the Pole Star. In the first place, the relative position of the three stars may be described as not incorrect. Next, there are two bright stars in a part of the sky not rich in bright stars ; their direction is more important than their distance. So far as distance is concerned, the narrowness of the stone, in proportion to its length, would quite exclude Vega and Altair. Careful measurements shew that if we increase the distance of Altair in the proportion of the length of the cup-marked area to its breadth, we find Altair very nearly its proper distance off the Pole Star. On the opposite side of the Pole Star, there is a lack of great stars behind the Great Bear, and there was not the same special reason for shewing the direction of outside stars by bringing them on to the narrow space between the Pole Star and the edge of the stone.

The curious fact that in order to produce this series of resemblances we have to use inversion by a mirror suggests a curious possibility. The magician had some material other than stone, something perhaps of the nature of deer-skin, on which he planned the stars as he saw them, with plenty of opportunity to make corrections as need arose. Having got his plan to his satisfaction, he marked each star with some adhesive coloured matter, and then laid the skin on the stone face downwards, and so marked on the stone the place for each star.

Another explanation goes too far. It is, that the stars on a celestial globe are so arranged that an eye looking at them from inside the globe would see them the right way round ; the Pict had some such idea in his mind.

Whatever the explanation of the phenomenon may have been, we are faced with the fact that if we are not entirely wrong in our suggestions there has remained, presumably for thousands of years, a great block of stone, very carefully sculptured, shewing the area of bright stars the wrong way round. We have to account for this. We account for it by a very simple, a very human, a very modern suggestion, based on the method by which our Plates VIII and LXI are themselves produced. The Rothiemay Stone was the standing type, as it were, the block, from which prints were taken off on deer-skin or other material for the schools of the magician apprentices of the neighbourhood. The prints would naturally be the right way round.

We shall be much misunderstood if it is supposed that we use these charts as evidence that the magicians were skilled in astronomy. As we pointed out some pages back, our whole position is that the great majority of the recumbent stones of the circles in our Pictish district were laid on astronomical principles, for astronomical purposes; that they were the scientific result, not of mere observations of the stars, but of astronomical investigation and calculation. The charts may be a fairly good representation of clusters of stars or of leading bright stars, and yet not indicate any knowledge at all of astronomy in a scientific sense. We take the astronomical knowledge of our Pictish circle builders to be beyond dispute. The interest of our star-charts is of a different nature. We appear to have found at Sin Hanny and Rothiemay the actual instruments used by the magician teachers in an elementary and in a secondary school for druid apprentices. If we are right in that opinion, we may claim that these two stones have an interest without known parallel among stones. Curiously enough, we learn that the new theory respecting the very inartistic outlines of some sculpturings or scratchings in prehistoric caves in Europe is, that they are in fact the rudimentary drawings done by elementary students in the cave schools of art, some ten thousand years ago.

### *Scandinavian cup-markings*

We have now to draw attention to certain figures and facts which tend to re-inforce our belief in the possibility of star-charts on some of our Caledonian stones, even in the face of the difficulties stated above.

After our Plate VIII had been prepared and described, an article appeared in Paris on rock sculptures and astronomical cup-marks in Scandinavia. The article was written by Dr M. Schönfeld, under the title of *Prehistoric Astronomy in Scandinavia*, and appeared in *La Nature*, 5 Fév. 1921. We have obtained from Messrs Masson permission to reproduce four of the illustrations of the article, which we give on Plate LXII. They are mostly taken from Baltzer's book on the rock-carvings of Bohuslän, Gotheborg, 1881 and 1891.

In figure 4 Dr Schönfeld finds at top the Great Bear and the Milky Way, "exactly in their respective positions." Below he finds all the figure-representatives of the constellations visible at Bohuslän at the autumnal equinox. Some of these figure-representatives are not clear, but we can understand the row of five animals to be the two Lions, the two Dogs, and the Lynx; while below them we accept the Twins and the Giant Orion.

In figure 1 Dr Schönfeld feels quite at home. He finds a long series of astronomical signs in an order perfectly correct, from left to right—Bootes, the Great Bear, the Lynx, the Twins, Orion. Below, the Cancer, and the Lion stretched along the body of a ship. The figure-representatives are the Serpent "with its head turned to the left, almost the exact position of the stars in this constellation," and the two Dogs—one upright, the other lying down; "if the latter is less recognisable, his curved tail is indisputable."

Figure 2, the stone at Venslev, speaks for itself.

The stone at Dalby, figure 3, is set on the top of a dolmen. The whole stellar scheme is "less nette" than on the Venslev stone, but we see the Lynx, the Lion, the Virgin, Bootes, with their characteristic stars. The bearings of the Great Bear and the Lynx are exact, as are those of the Lion, Virgo, and Bootes, but the distance of this last from the Bear is much too great.

Dr Schönfeld remarks that the most complete of the carvings on the rocks generally represent the sky at the characteristic seasons of the year, the equinoxes and the summer solstice. This emphasises their religious significance, and shews their connection with annual feasts. They served also as guides for maritime commerce from south to north.

He raises the question, were the marks made from memory or from designs? He excludes the idea of a graven chart made by night direct from the sky as a too difficult piece of work. Some, however, are too correct, he thinks, to have been done from memory. He regards figure 1 as so remarkably correct that it is difficult to imagine its being made without a pattern. He supposes that some one marked the stars by night on a piece of wood, and transferred them to the stone by day. He feels that sceptical critics will regard his conclusions as not well founded; but Scandinavian archaeologists had taken it in hand to shew that direct maritime relations existed between the north of Jutland and countries far away to the south in the Stone Age.

### *Theory of astronomical registration*

There is yet another interest in our ancient cup-markings, which is being developed by Mr Ludovic Mann. It turns upon the idea that they are registers of events, as we have suggested in these pages.

Mr Mann's theory, which we understand is accepted by astronomical and archaeological experts as proved, goes far and deep. It is to the effect that the metrology of stone circles and rock and stone carvings of the late Neolithic and the Bronze Ages throughout Western Europe is identical, and that underlying these plans and designs are astronomical registrations of recurrent cycles of time. It has even been held that the magician priests could predict eclipses from some of these registers, which have the results of three separate registrations imposed upon the stone. The author of the theory speaks of an accuracy of measurement almost unbelievable.

We gather from Mr Mann that in his large experience of cup-marks he has not found such resemblances to constellations as I seem to find on my two stones. But in one case, near Brodick in Arran, he found seven very small cups arranged in the form of the Great Bear. They lay completely alone on the living rock surface of sandstone, recently cleared of turf. They were minute and very exact, about the size of a sixpence, in an area about 14 inches by 7. We may add that in Sir James Simpson's book to which reference was made on page 140, there is, quite unnoticed, a very decided Little Bear at the foot of his Plate XVIII, fig. 2, on a stone of the circle at Ballymenach, Argyllshire, in close connection with a ringed cup, and unaccompanied by other cups.

Mr Mann has found that the accuracy of complicated registrations by means of cup-marks is surprisingly perfect. We cannot argue from this that the cup-markers had the power of copying the constellations with accuracy as perfect. In the case of registration marks, it is easy to imagine the surface of a stone chalked like a great chess-board, and cup-marks drilled with accuracy in the centres or in one or other of the four corners of the little squares here and there according to the method adopted. It is an entirely different matter to copy with cup-marks the stars in Cassiopeia or the Pleiades; still more to make a chart of the northern hemisphere with any approach to mathematical accuracy. In the former case the magician makes his own picture, exactly as he will, and cannot go wrong; in the latter case he has to copy someone else's picture, and an exceedingly difficult picture too.

As we write, we learn that Mr Mann has discovered "at Green Island, Jersey, known to be the site of a prehistoric cemetery, in the rock surface, several small shallow beautifully carved cups, perfectly circular, in character identical with those found on rocks and slabs of prehistoric caves in England and on the Continent. Such sculpturings have not been noted in the Channel Islands before. They are assigned to the latest phase of the neolithic period."

It is of importance to note Mr Mann's insistence, both in this case and in the case given above, on the minute exactness of carving of the circular cups, as preserved by turf coverings. If we postulate the same exactness for the Sin Hinny cups as they were originally made, the mind is lost in wonder at

the length of time that must have elapsed to bring about the present worn appearance of cavities on a block of hard grey granite.

Mr Mann has most obligingly informed us that he has measured, photographed, and taken rubbings of, four examples in Jersey, three in Herm, and eight in Guernsey. There are fine cup-markings on the covering slab of an ancient well, and on the capstones of several of the dolmens. So far as he has worked out the placings of the cups, they are all placed on the astronomical principles referred to above. In answer to our question, he adds that he has not been able to detect any clear likeness to any of the constellations. Thus the further we enquire among the relics of our ancestral races, the more unique our Sin Hinny and Rothiemay charts appear to be.

We sincerely hope that this chapter, on two of the stones in our district, will bring a fresh interest to the minds of many who love to wander among the relics of long-past ages, and seek to peep into their mysteries. We feel some anxiety as to the preservation of these stones.

*Note.* Since the above remarks were in print we have received from Miss Arbuthnot Leslie of Warthill an engraving of a cup-marked stone on Deskry Farm, Strathdon, which appeared in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* on June 18 of the present year. The stone is about 3 feet high. There are on it, besides three disconnected cups, six small rather rude cups forming a perfect Latin cross, and six large cups, well wrought, looking curiously new, forming another perfect Latin cross. There are, besides, two little Latin crosses in rude outline. If the rude cups of the smaller Latin cross and the two rude outline crosses are genuine, we must apparently understand that cup-marking was still going on after the introduction of Christianity.



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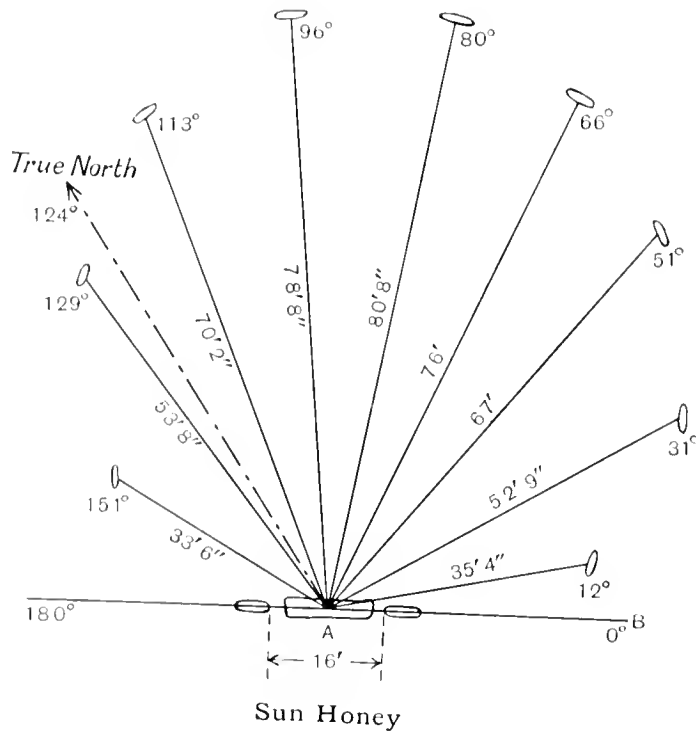
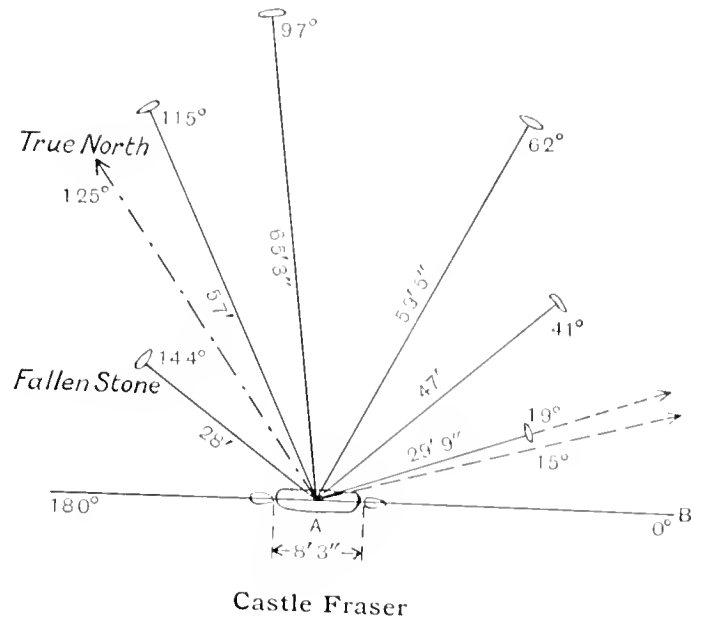
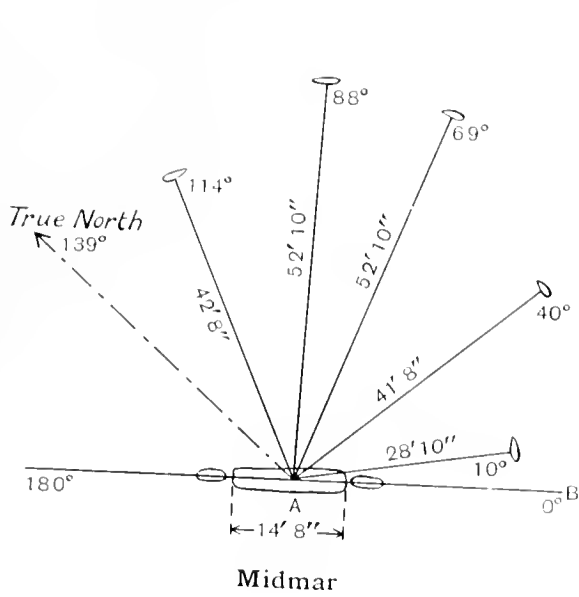
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# PLATES









The Barmekyn of Echt, from above

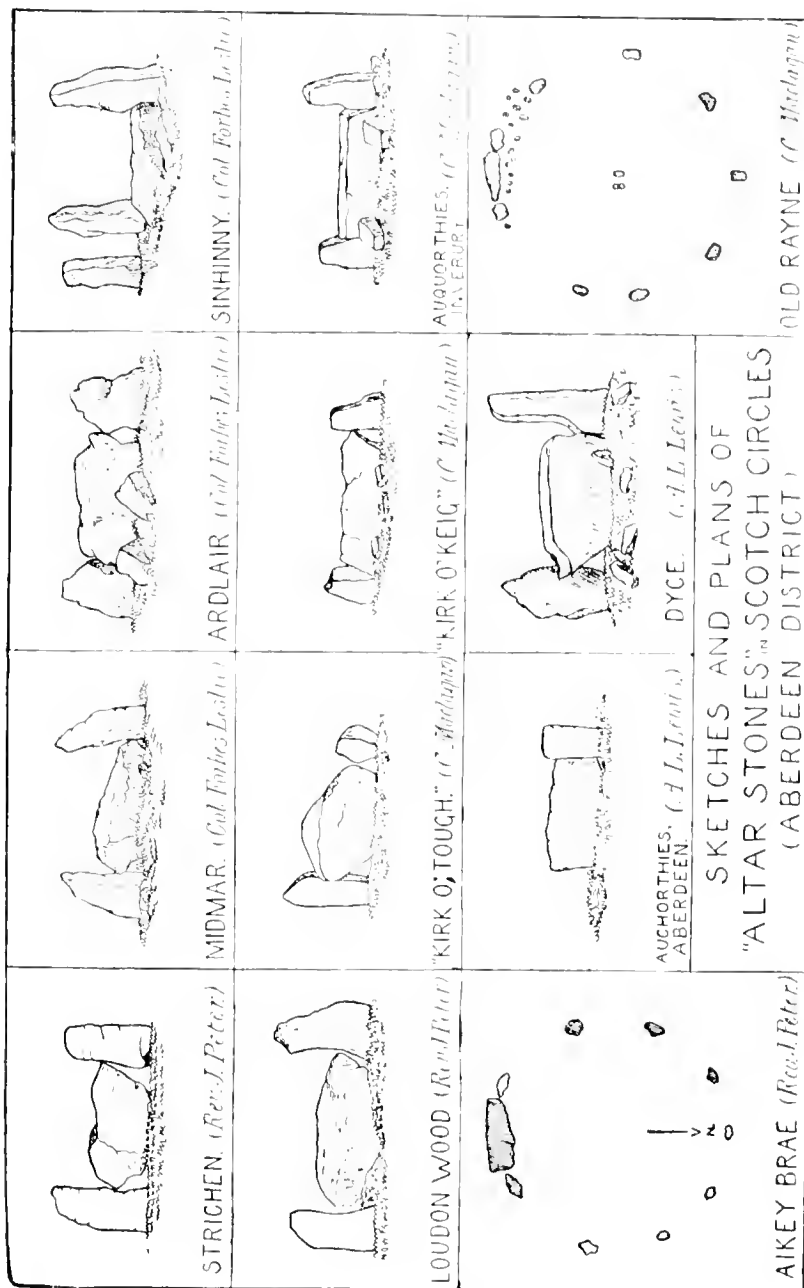






The Barmekyn of Echt, from below









Wester Echt. Two Stones and Flanker



Nether Corskie. Flankers





The Sin Hinny Circle



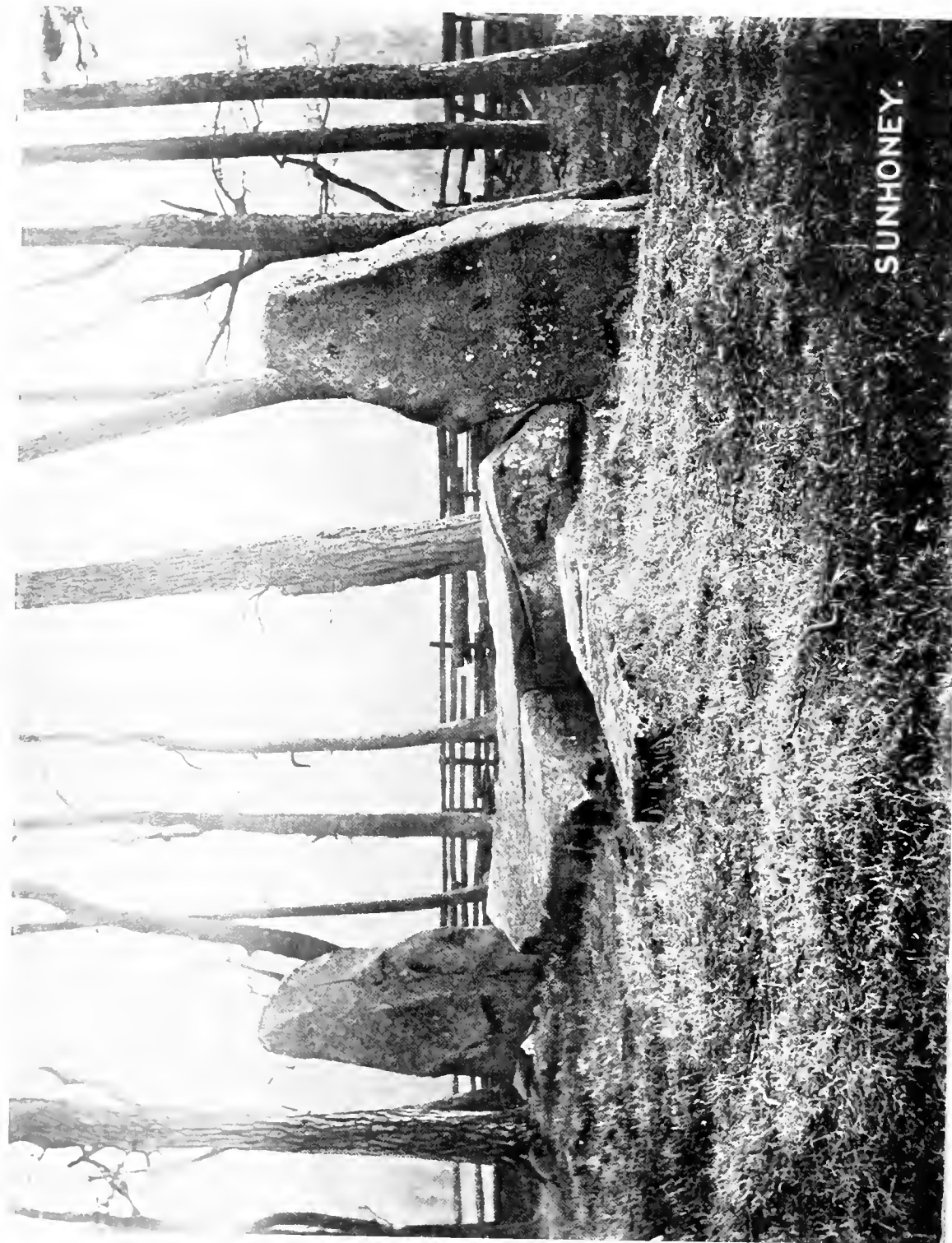
Seat of Justice, Midmar



The Bass of Inverurie

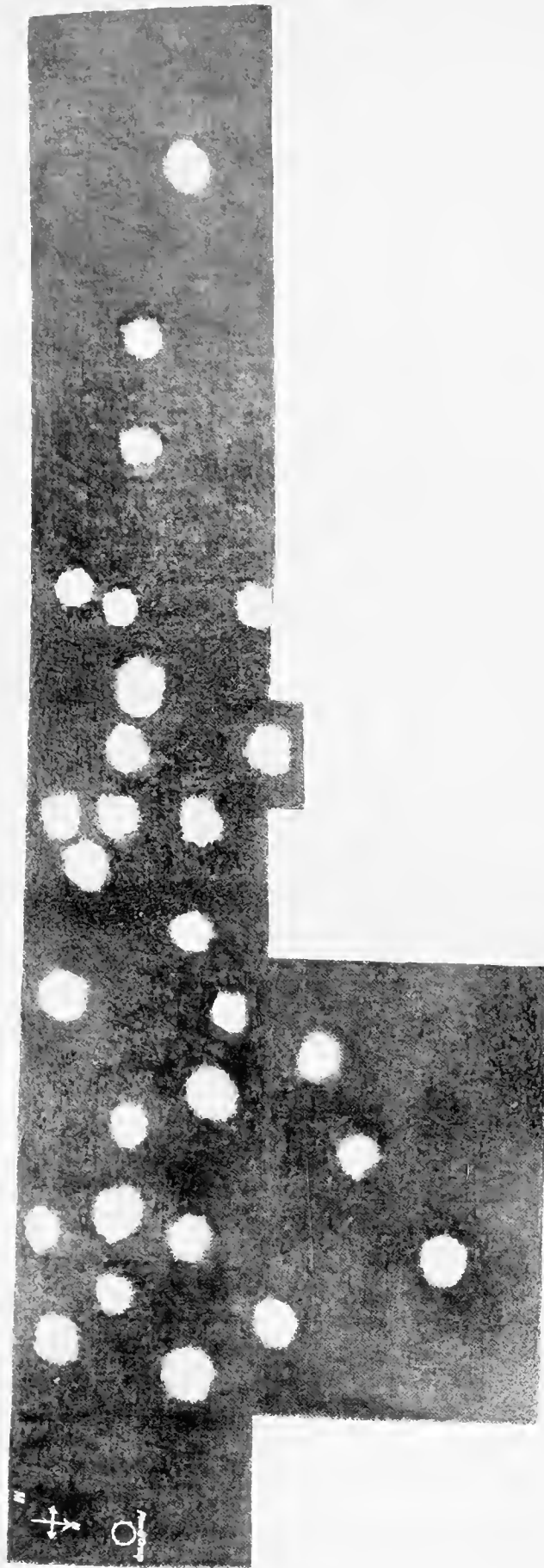






Sin Hinny. Recumbent Stone and Flankers





Sin Hinny. Cup-markings





Midmar. Recumbent Stone and Flankers





The Midmar Circle







Castle Fraser. Recumbent Stone and Flankers





Auquhorthies. Recumbent Stone, Flankers and Props





Loanhead. Recumbent Stone and Flankers





Loanhead of Daviot. Double Recumbent Stone







Newcraig, Daviot. Recumbent Stone and Flankers





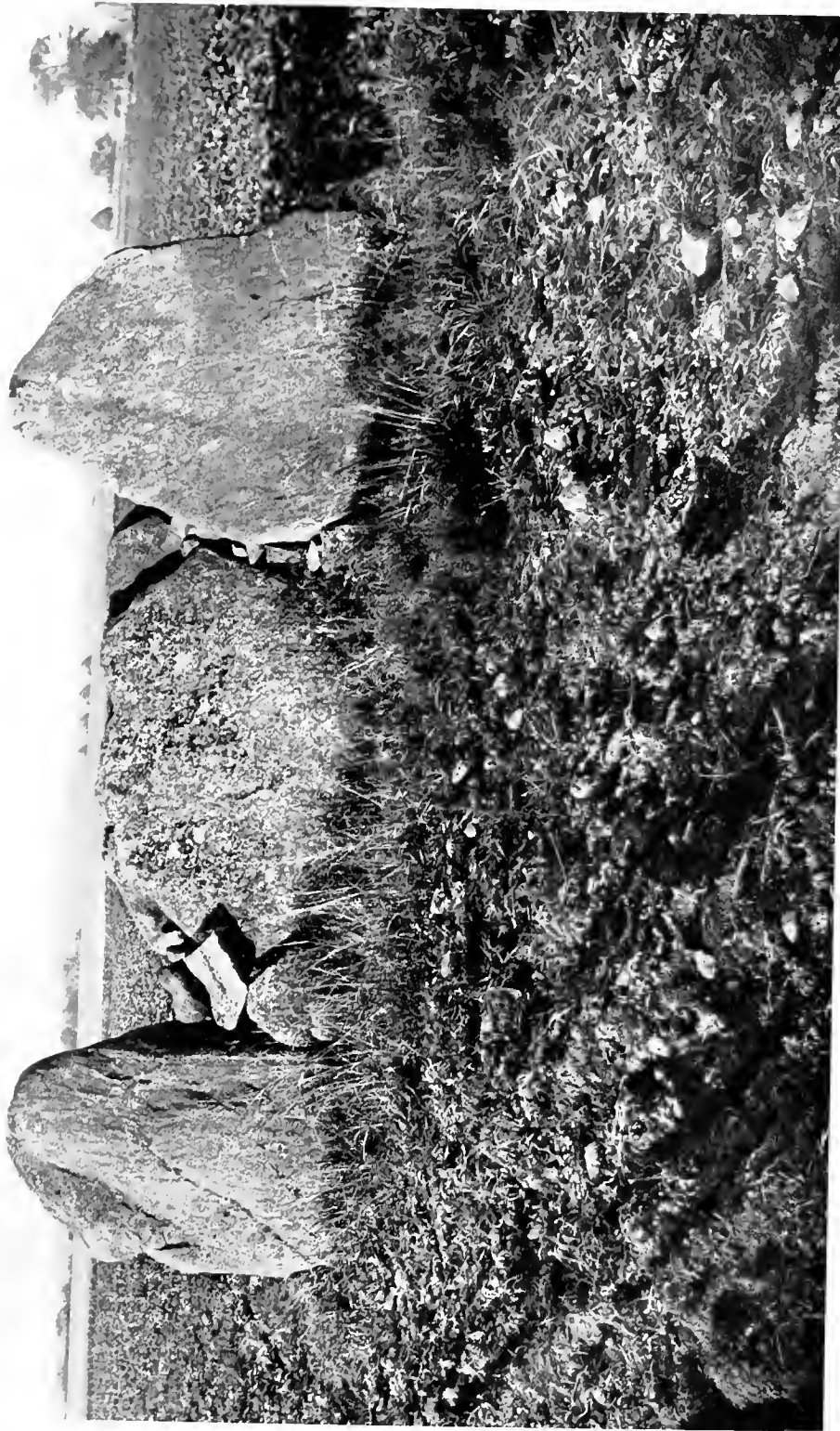
Newcraig. Cupmarked Stone outside the Circle





Kirkton of Bourtie. Recumbent Stone and Flanker





South Ley Lodge. Recumbent Stone and Flankers







Tomnagorn. Recumbent Stone and Flanker





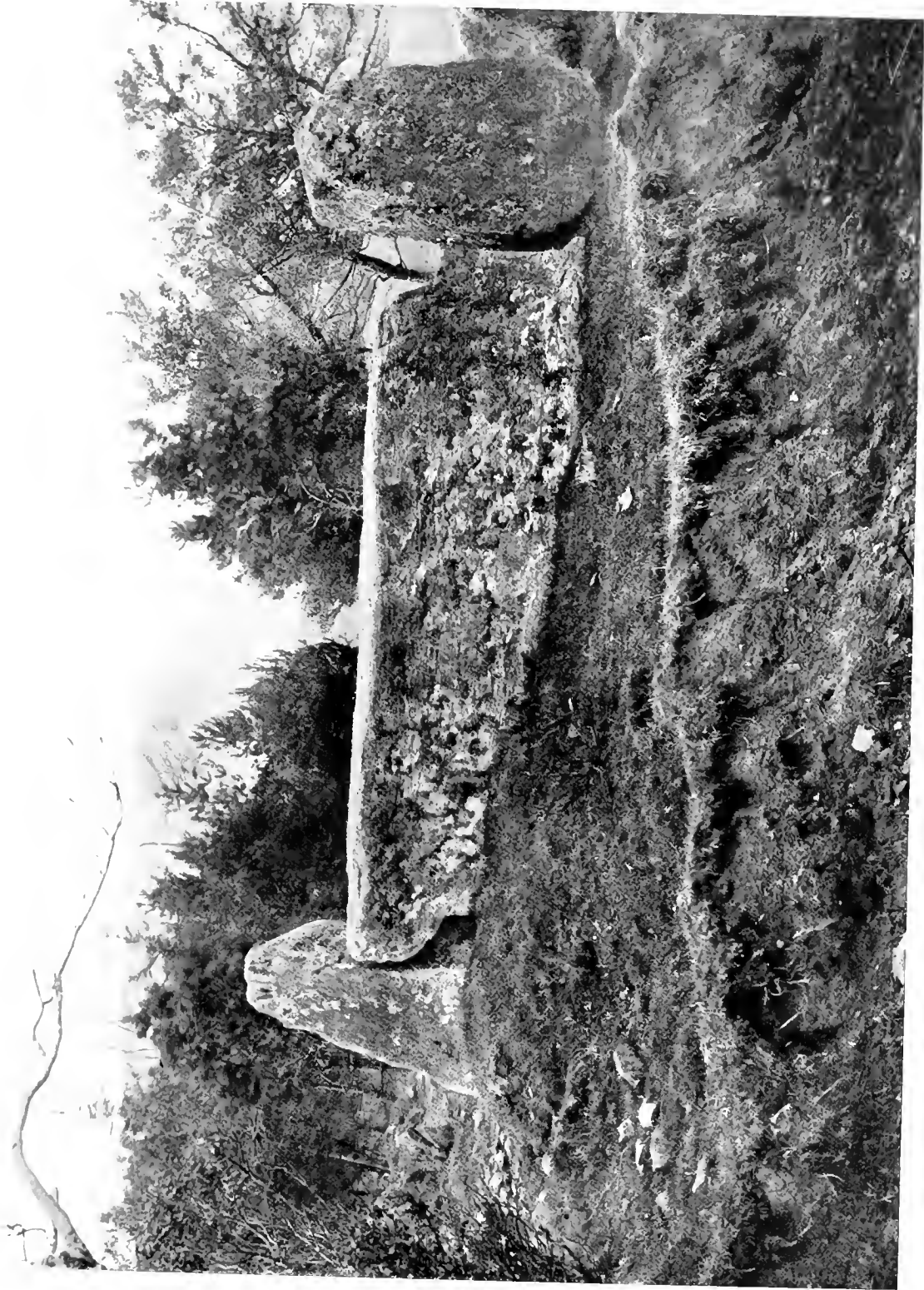
South Fornet. Flankers





Cothie Muir. Recumbent Stone and Flankers

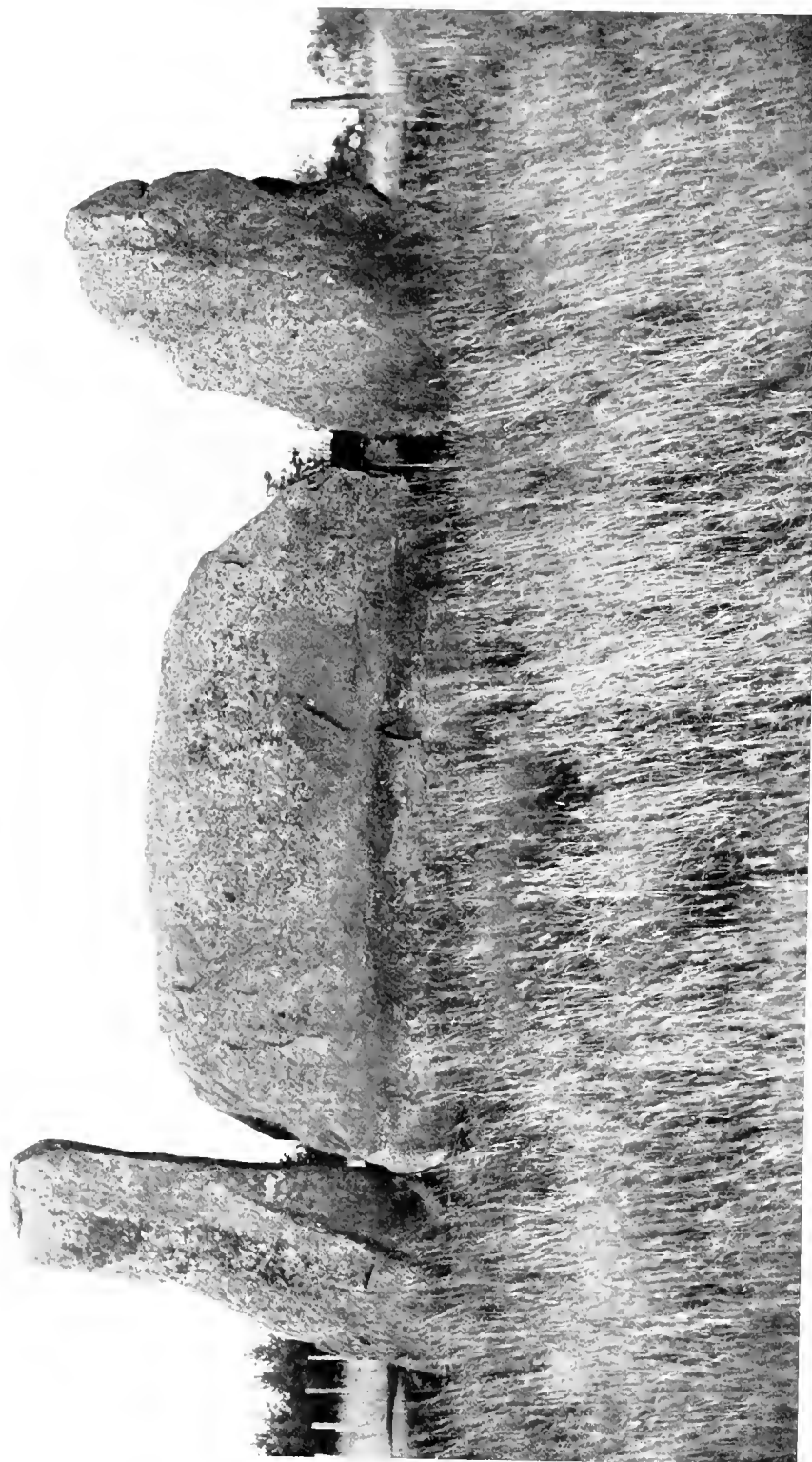




Auld Keig. Recumbent Stone and Flankers







Stonehead. Recumbent Stone and Flankers





Candle Hill. Insch. Recumbent Stone and fallen Flankers





Inschfield (Nether Boddam). Recumbent Stone and Flanker





Ardlair. Recumbent Stone, Flankers and Props





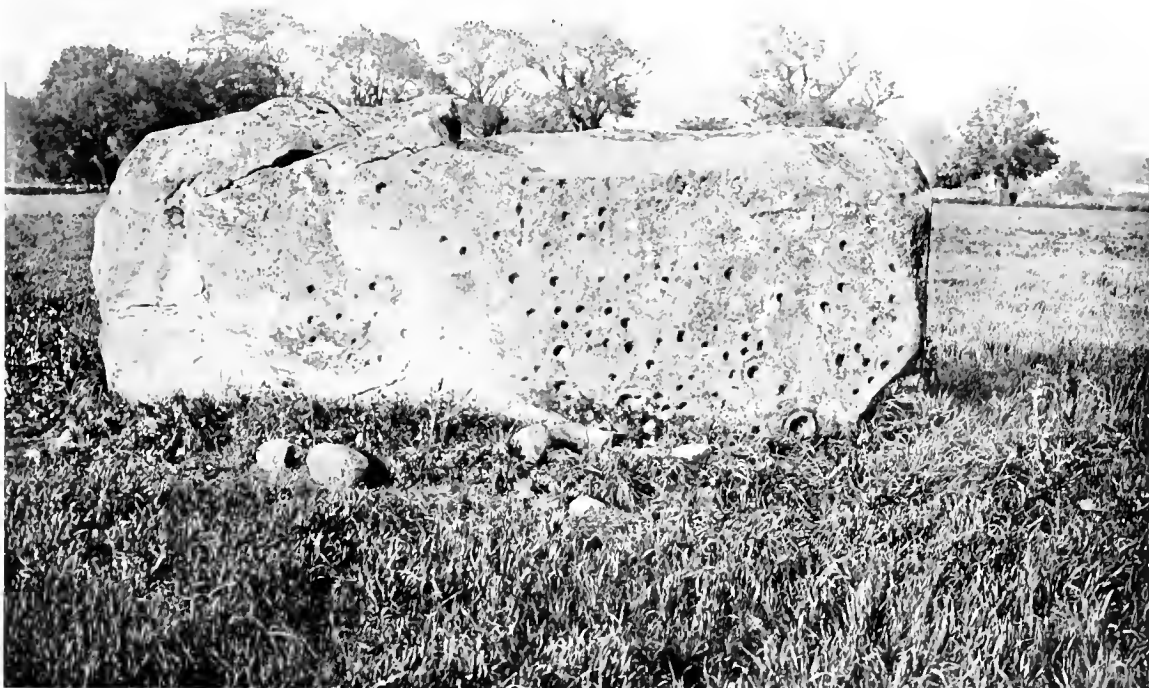


Wanton Wells, Insch. Recumbent Stone and Flanker





The Rothiemay Circle



Rothiemay. Recumbent Stone, cup marked





Auld Kirk o' Tough



Whitehill Wood, Monymusk. Recumbent Stone and Flanker





Bracehead of Leslie. Recumbent Stone



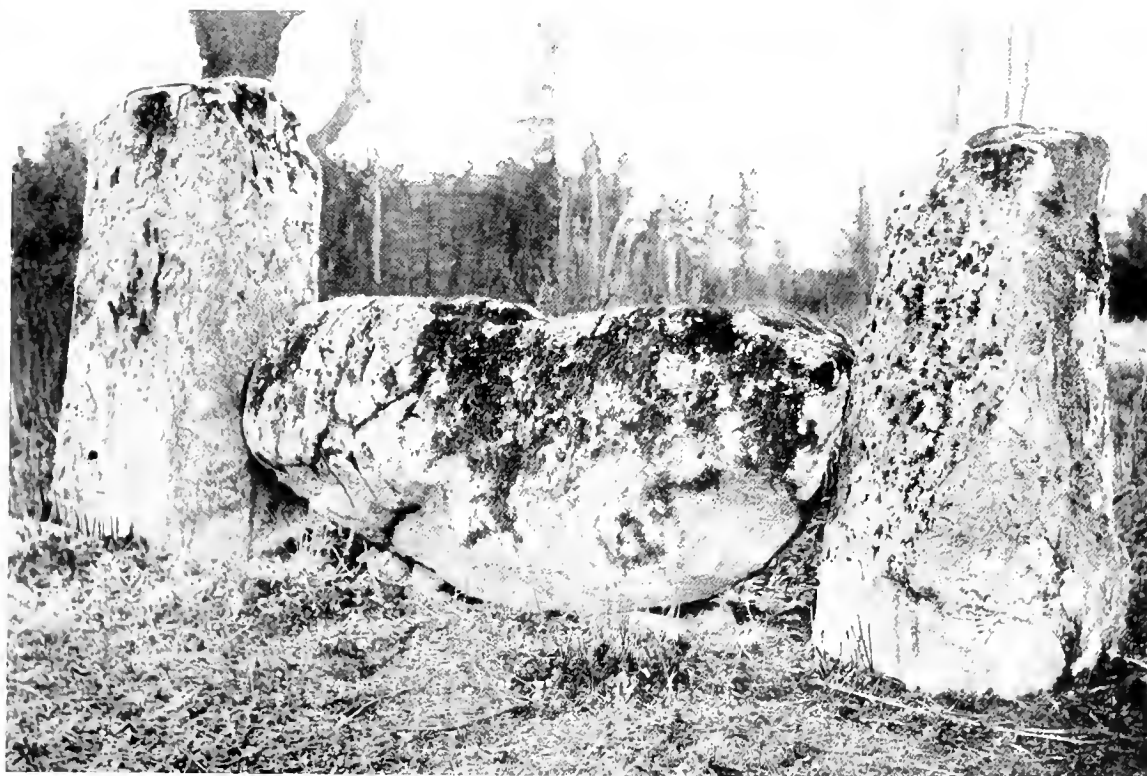
Candle Hill, Oyne. Recumbent Stone and Flanker







Dyce. Recumbent Stone and Flankers



Strichen. Recumbent Stone and Flankers





The Old Rayne Circle



Old Rayne. Recumbent Stone and fallen Flankers



The Dyce Circle





The Cothie Muir Circle



The Balquhain Circle and Obelisk



Balquhain. Recumbent Stone and Flanker





Standing Stones of Echt



Aikey Brae. Recumbent Stone and Flankers



Louden Wood. Recumbent Stone and Flanker



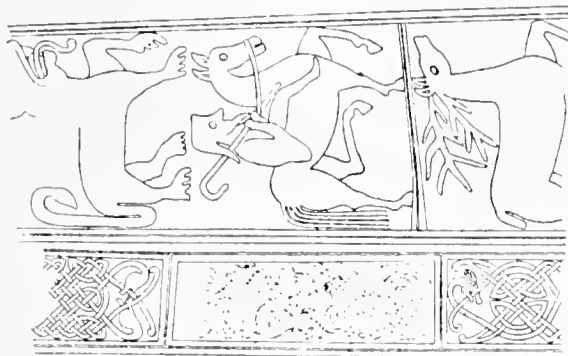




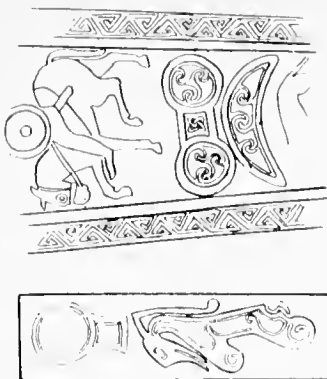
Druids' Temple Farm, Inverness. Monolith

41223  
2402341  
23402341  
23402341

## St Vigean's



# Clonmacnois



Meigle

nostram animi i regni regerant  
pitantia. **Q**uius tenuitatem.  
quo en. ea vincta. aliorum memo  
quereant si iustitiam inuenit  
occlus. **Q**uododi. an filius pu

## The Aed Chronicle





Clava. Monolith





Druids' Temple Farm Circle, Inverness





Druids' Temple Farm Circle, Inverness





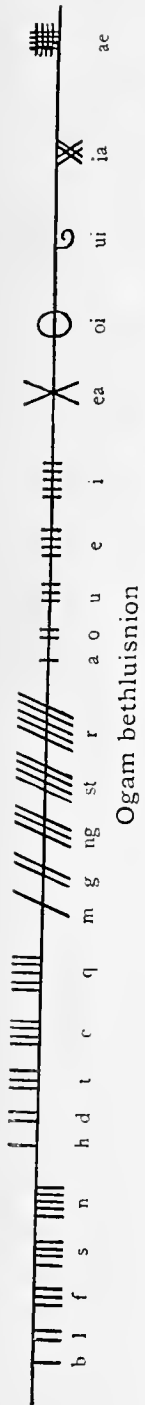


The Cullaird Circle. Torbreck, Inverness

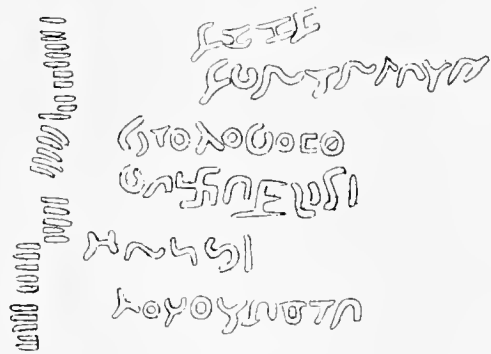




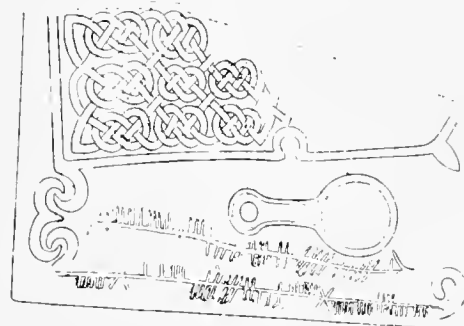
The Newton Stones



Scoonie



Newton

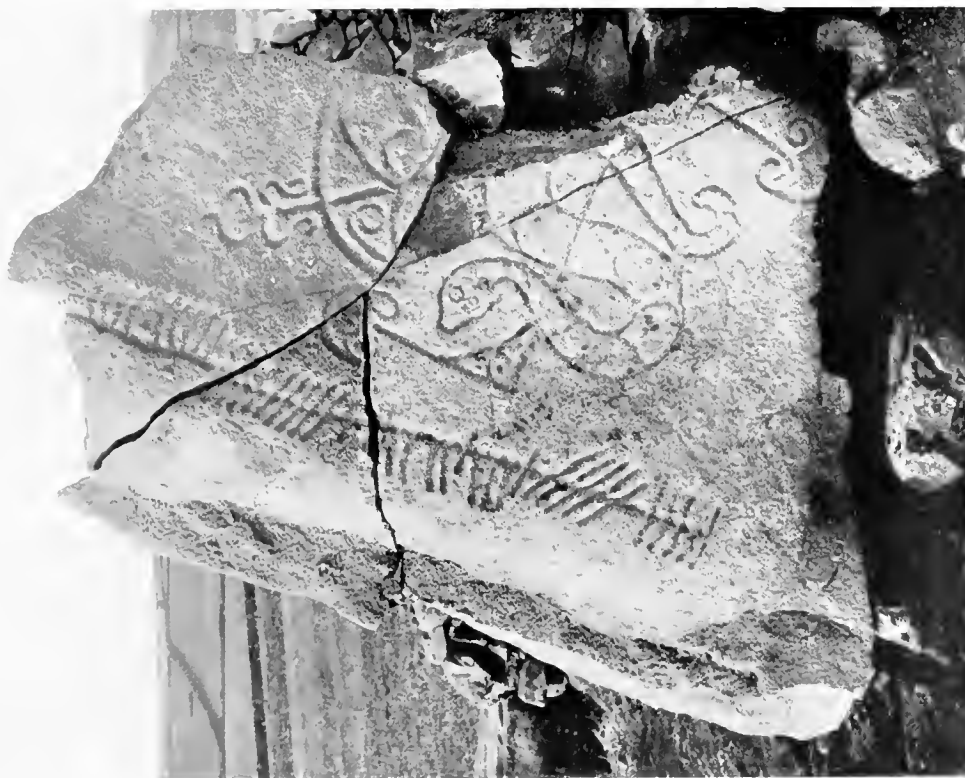


Aboyne



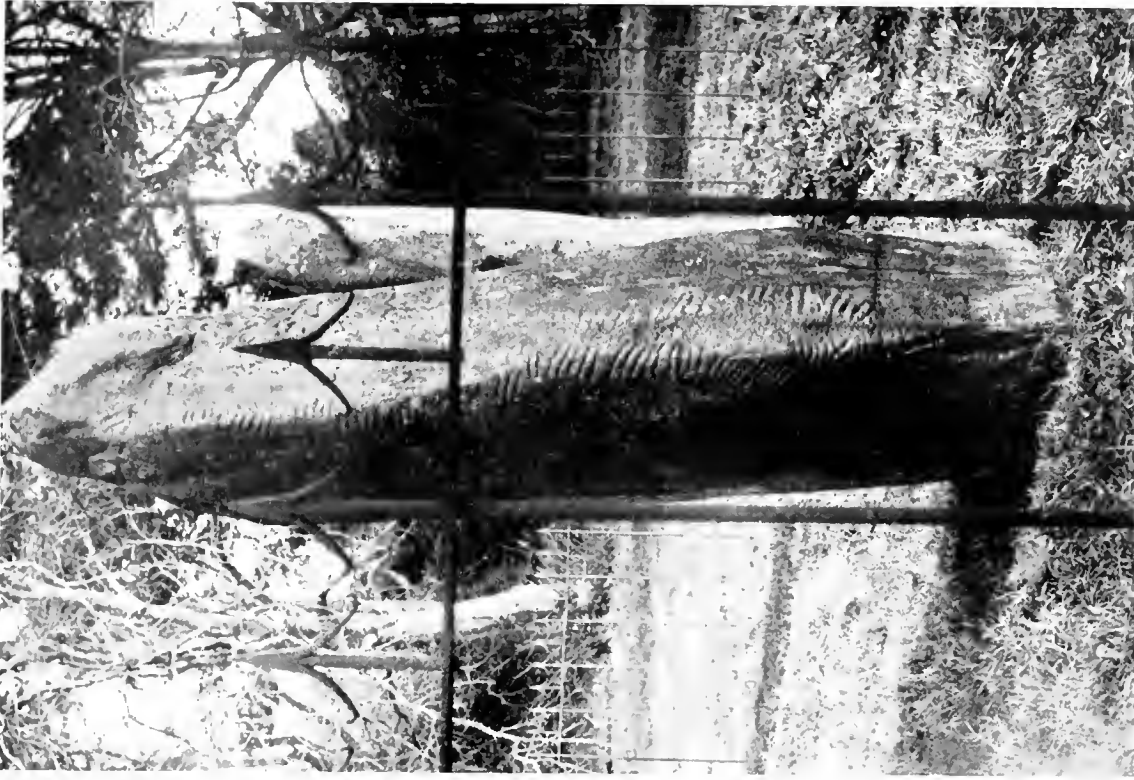


1. The Aboyne Stone



2. The Brandsbutt Stone





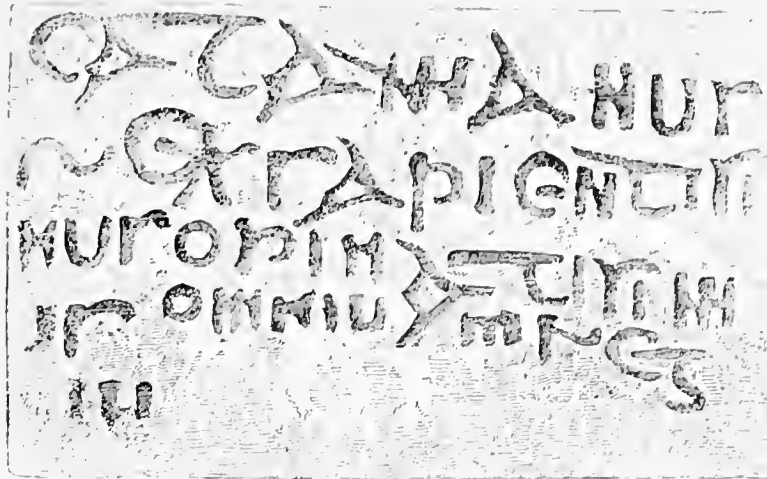
1. The Newton Ogams



2. The Newton Minuscules





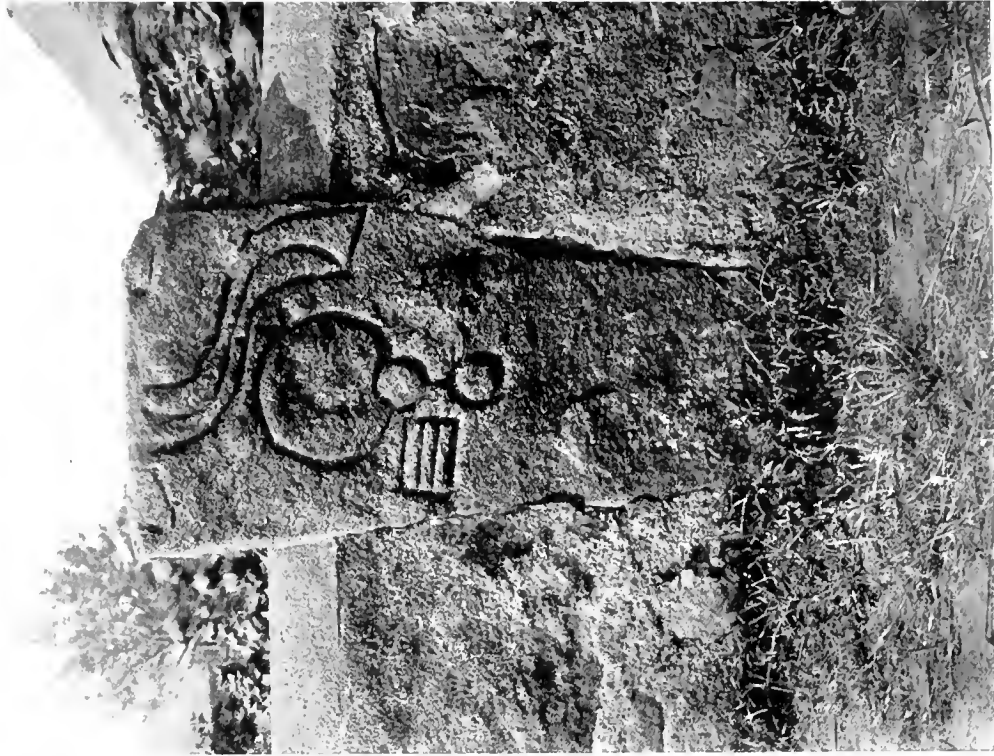


The Cataman Inscription



The Conyng Hillock, Inverurie





1. Drimmies Farm



2. Tillytarmont, Rothiemay





1a  
1b  
In the gable of the Old Church, Dyce

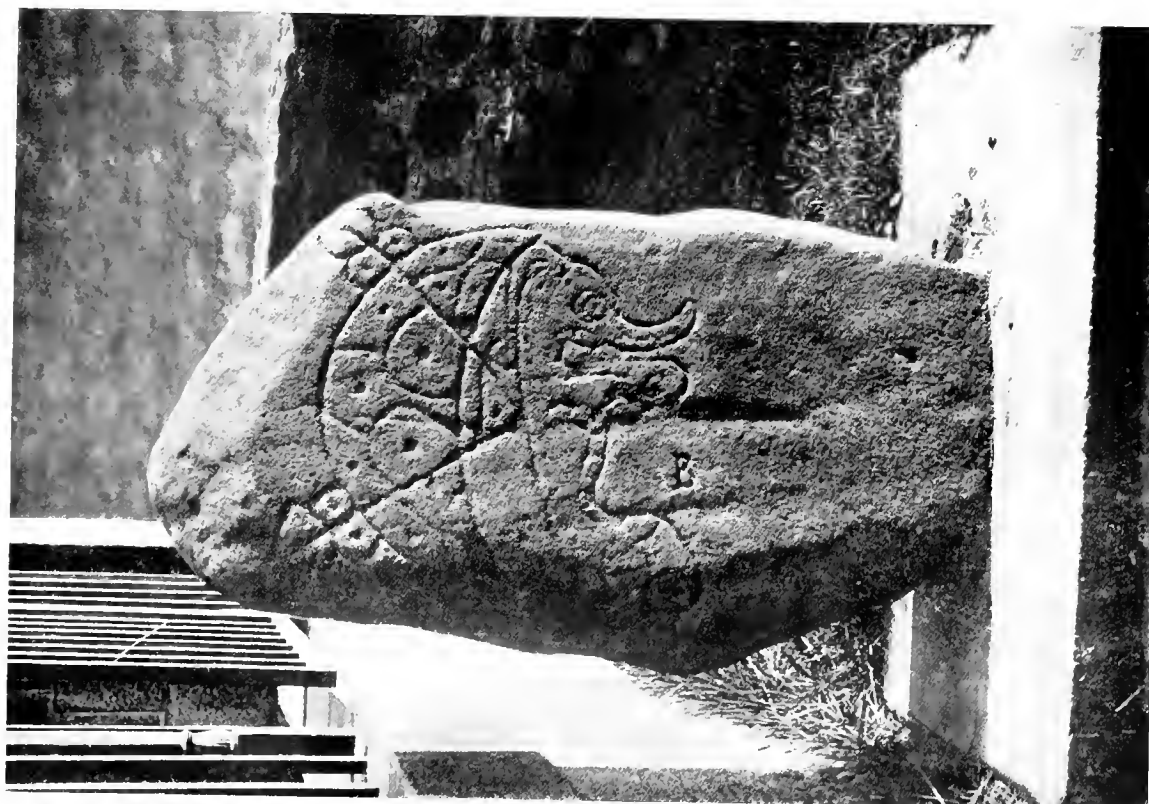


2. The Crow Stone, Rhynie





1. Kintore Churchyard, front



2. Kintore Churchyard, back







1. Logie Elphinstone



2. Logie Elphinstone





1. Logie Elphinstone



2. Inverurie Churchyard





1. Inverurie Churchyard



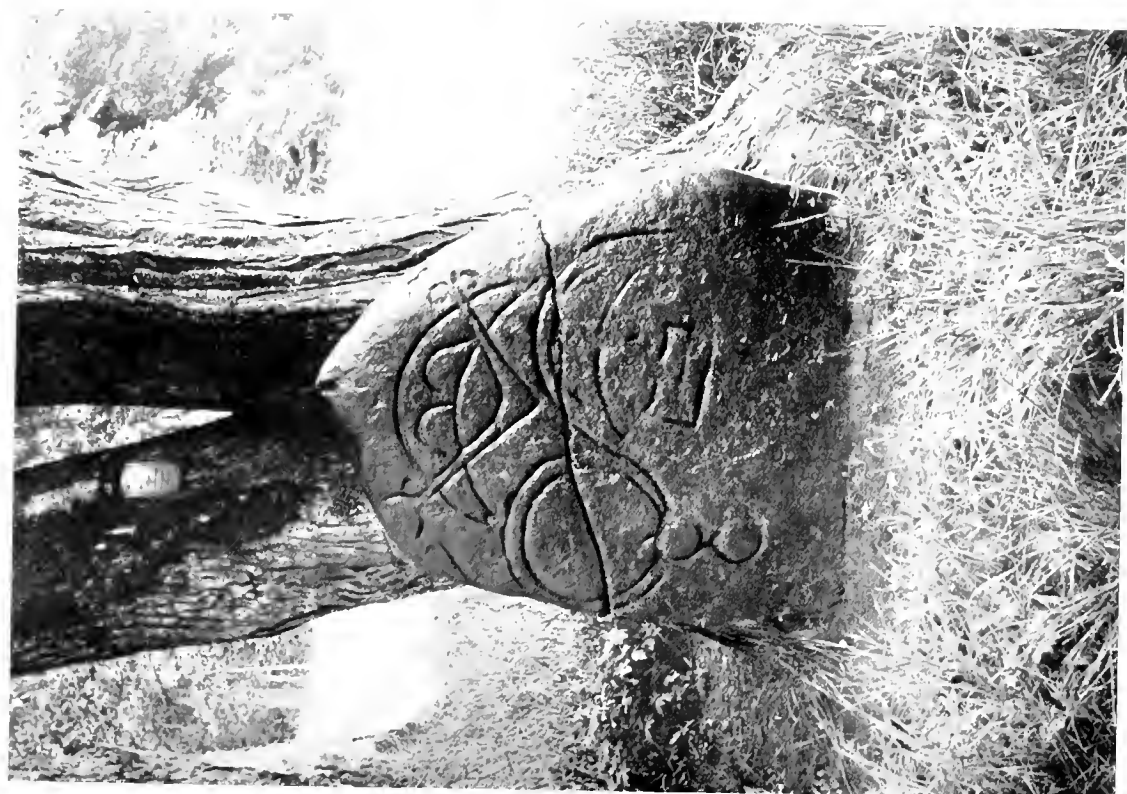
2. Inverurie Churchyard







1. Rhynie Churchyard



2. Newton of Mounie, Daviot







1. Broomend of Critchie



2. Clatt Churchyard





1. St Wolock's Stone. Logie Coldstone



2. Tillypronie





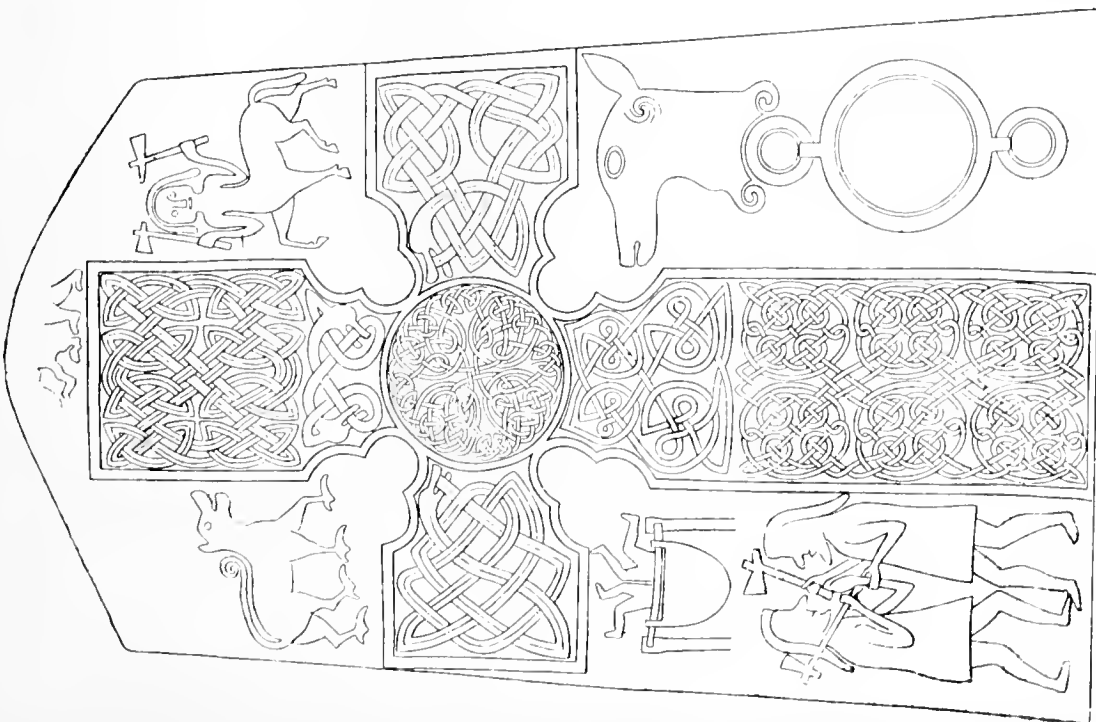
1. Toft Hills, Clatt



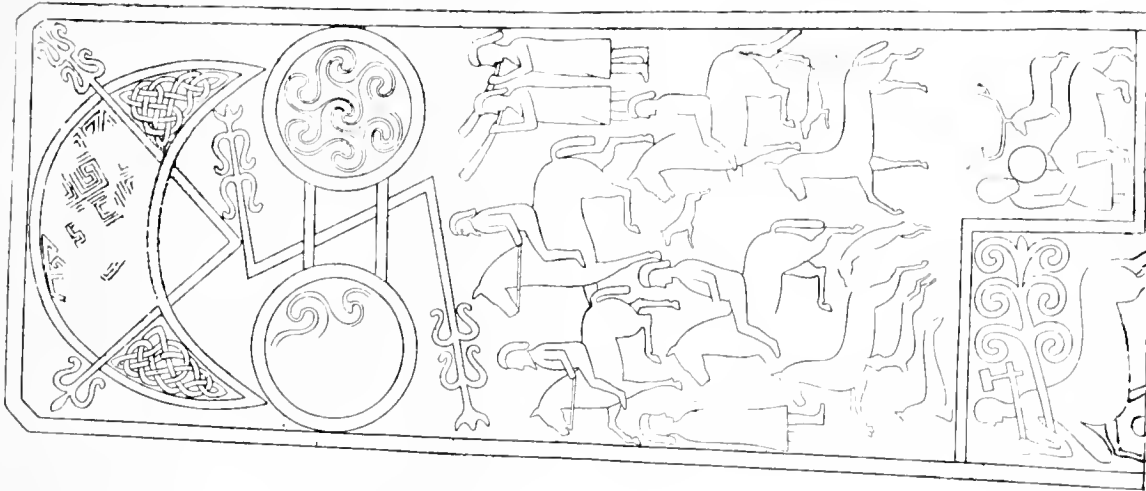
2. On the lawn at Dunecht House



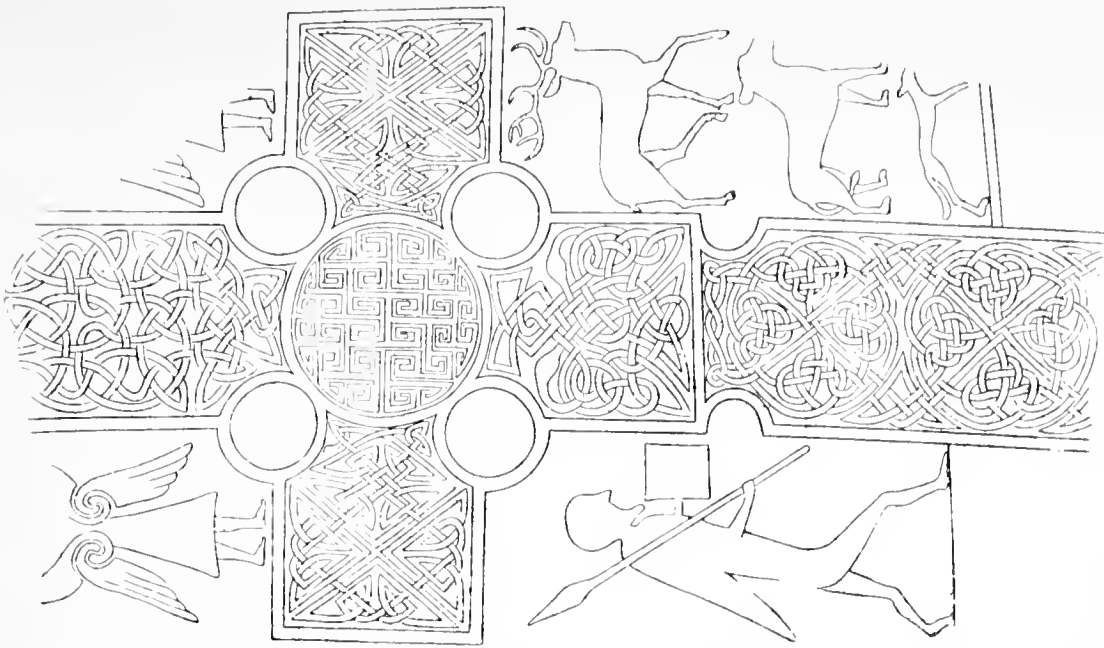




1. Glamis, 1—18



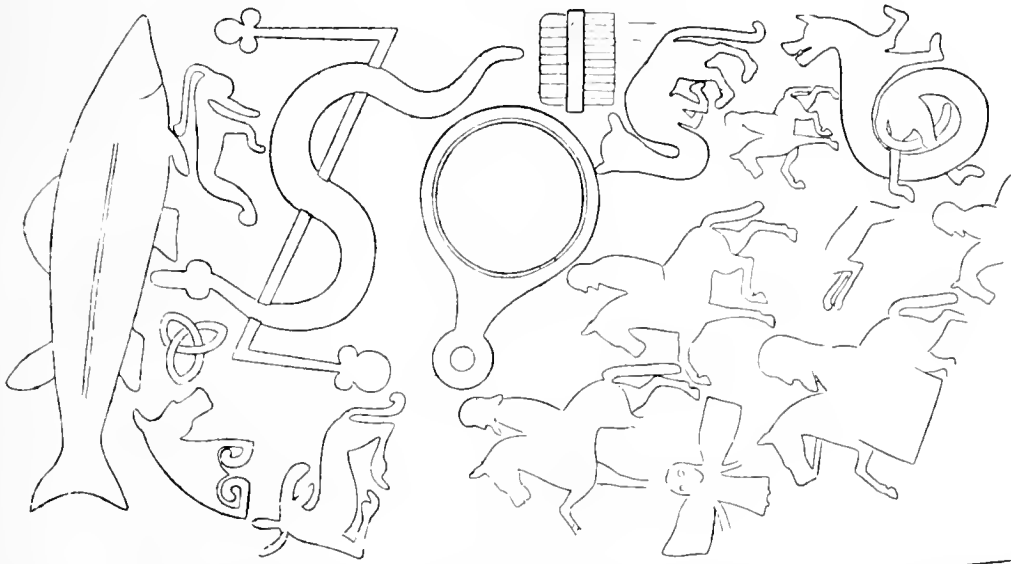
2. Aberlemno, 1—18



3. Eassie, 1—12



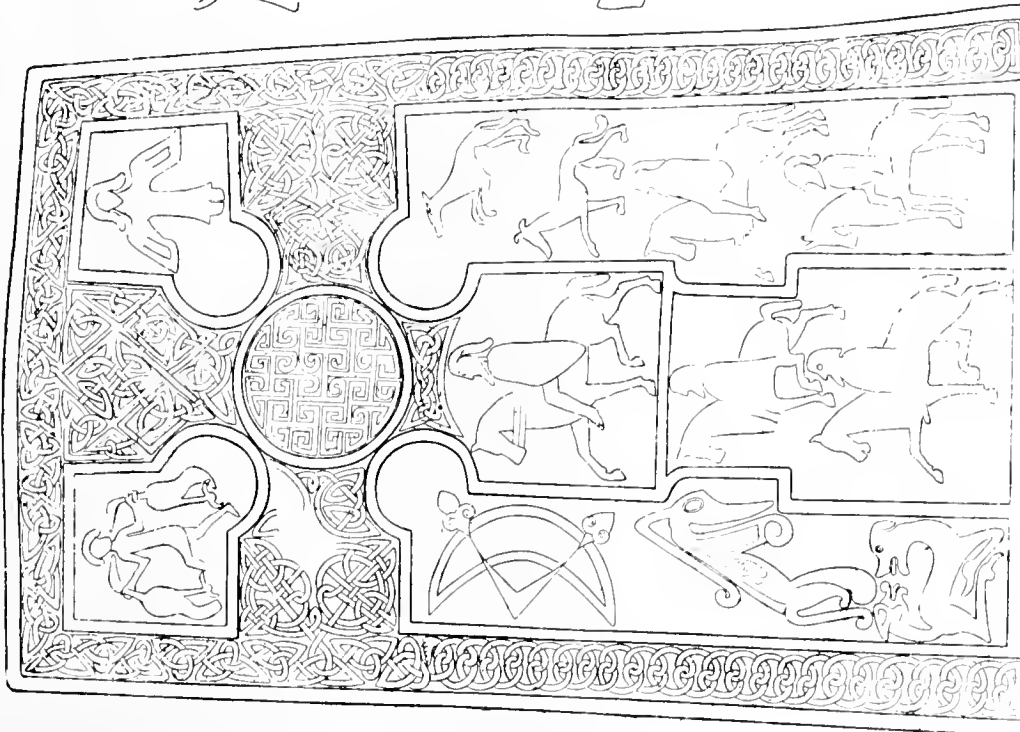




2. Meigle, I-12



3. Meigle, I-18



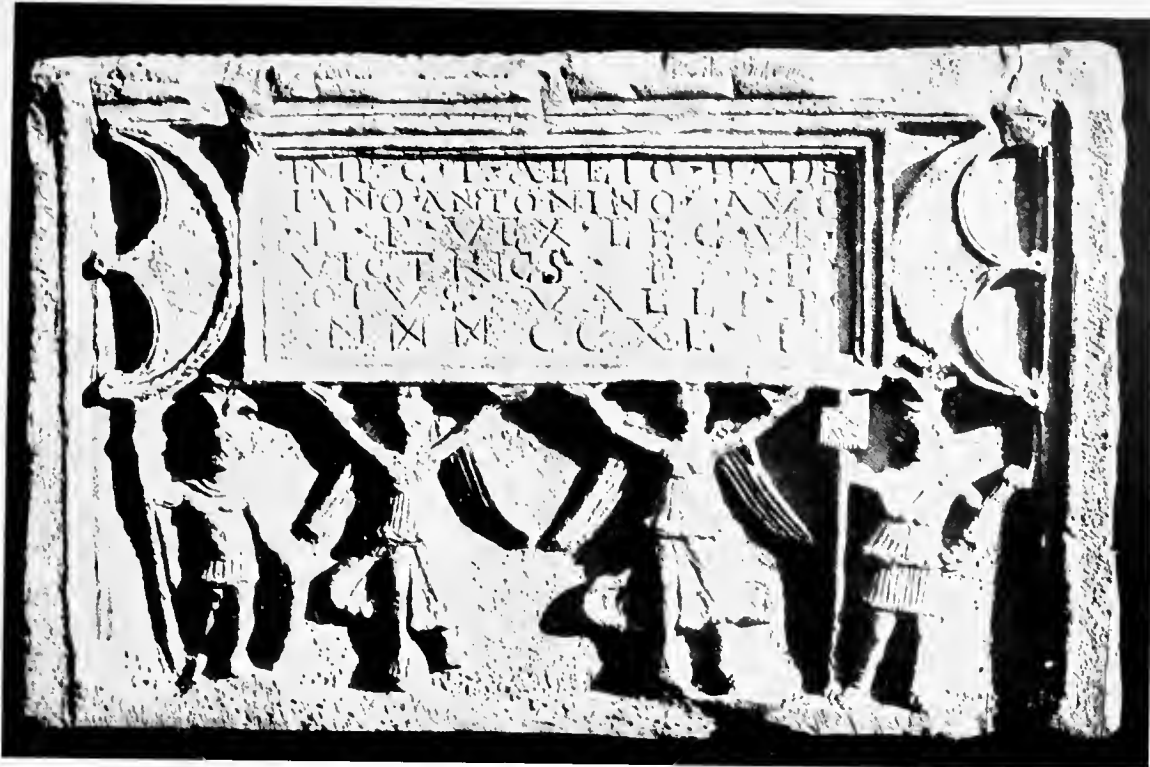
1. Rossie, I-12





The Maiden Stone





1. Legionary tablet from the turf wall



2. Legionary tablet from the turf wall





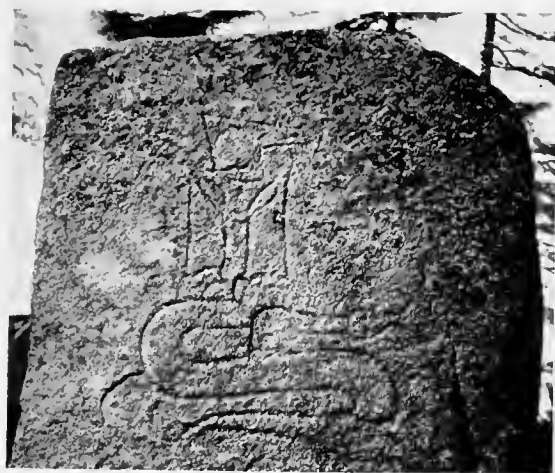
1. Legionary tablet from the turf wall



2. Legionary tablet from the turf wall







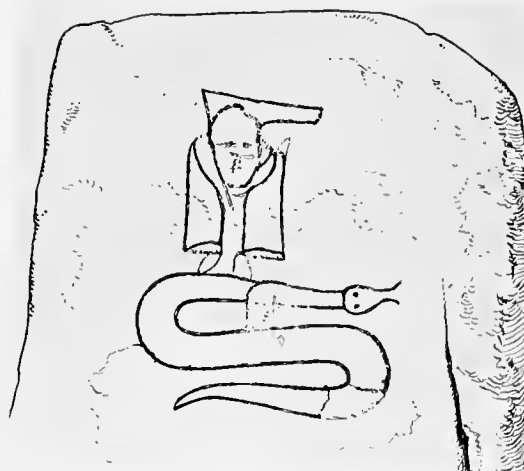
1. The Craigmyle Stone



2. The Craigmyle suggestions



3. Invergowrie 1—12



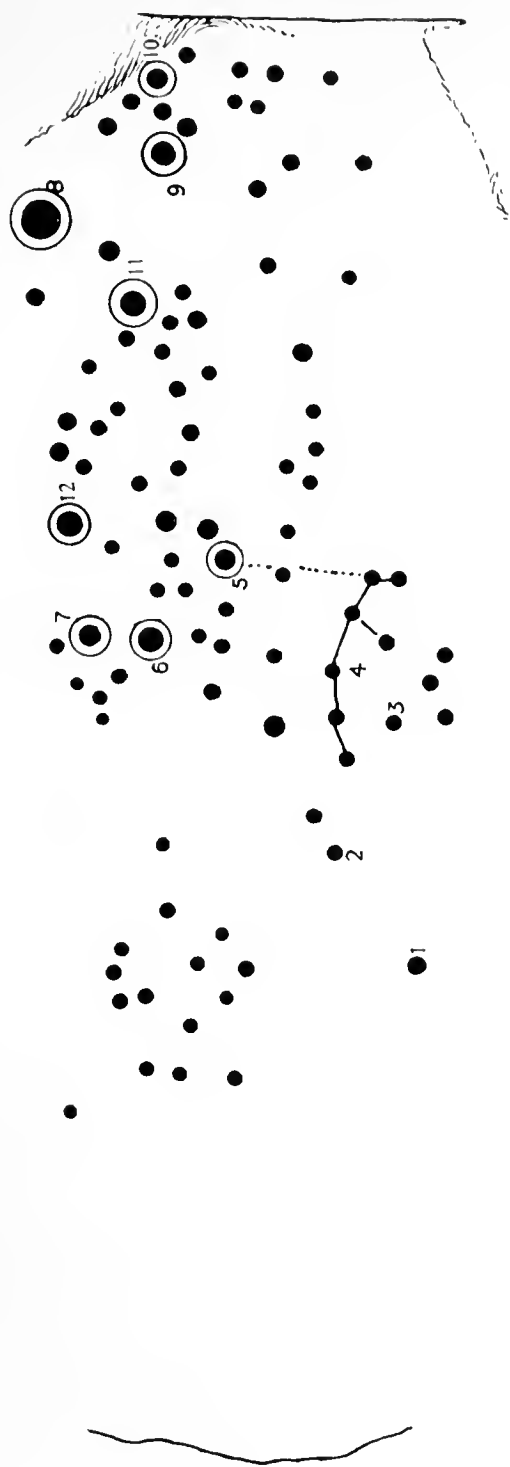
4. The Craigmyle incisions





The Rothiemay Cup-markings



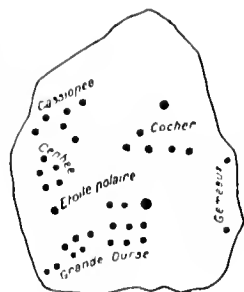


The Rothiemay Stars

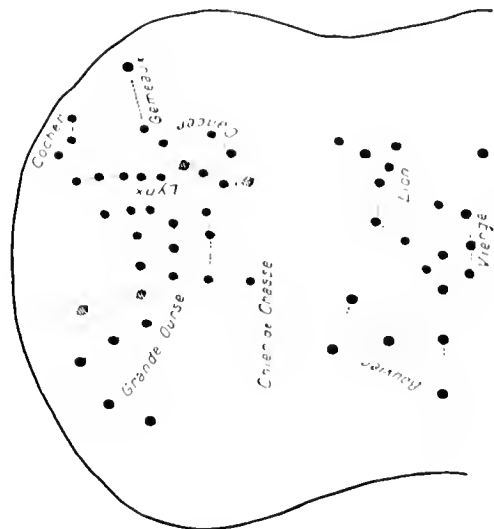




## I. Bohuslän



## 2. Venslev



### 3. Dalby



#### 4. Bohuslän

## Scandinavian Stars







## The Northern Heavens









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